

ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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SOVIET TEACHING PROBLEMS

A Symposium

I

School and Life

Yelena Kononenko

SUMMER days always pass quickly. They not merely pass, they rush, they fairly fly. It seems only yesterday that the tiny poplar leaves were bursting from their buds, yet today the poplar is rustling with bright green foliage ; and before you have time to turn round the air is full of the grey fluff that flies from the tree as it seeds. . . . In short, young Grishutka, who has just gone away for a country holiday with his nursery school, will soon be having his seventh birthday and going to a proper school. His mother has already got her eye on a nice school uniform, and is gradually buying everything he will need. He will be a gorgeous sight in his first long trousers and a tunic with gilt buttons. All that has been bought so far is a belt, with a buckle that shines like the sun. Grishutka solemnly buckled on the belt over his shorts, jumped on his hobby-horse and set off at a gallop.

"Silly kid !" smiled his mother. "He's near enough a schoolboy now, though."

She is pleased and happy. But an uneasy feeling is lurking somewhere deep down. One fine day Grishutka will be off to school. The school day for class 1 ends early. She will be still at work when it ends. The other children in the class will be called for by mothers, grannies, nannies. There is no one to call for Grishutka. Well, that can be managed. She will ask one of the mothers who lives in the neighbourhood to see him across the road, and before long he will get used to finding his own way home safely. But when he does get home, what is he going to do there all on his own ? Will he eat his meal at the right time, and manage not to scald himself with the hot soup ? Will he sit down to do his homework when he should, or will he be running about in the streets, with his latch-key round his neck, till she or his father gets home from the factory ? What if he takes it into his head to hang on behind a lorry, like Mrs. Yermolayeva's little boy who was nearly killed ?

They've started building boarding schools now. That's a good thing. Very good. Lots of mothers will be glad to send their children there. She might even be prepared to let Grishutka go to one. If everything was right and proper, that is. The home would be bleak and bare without him, though. She can still fetch him from the nursery school as she comes home from work now. What a joy it is every time to set eyes on him again. While you take him home he chatters away, telling you about all sorts of things, and saying poems, and singing songs for you, and asking a thousand and one questions. You can see how happy he is to be with you, too, how he looks up to you and clings to you with all his little childish heart. Then his father comes home from the works and has his special time with Grishutka, and soon forgets he had been feeling tired ; you can see his eyes begin to smile again.

No, we couldn't do without Grishutka ; where would the family be without him, only the two of us looking at one another ? Besides . . . No, I couldn't send Grishutka to boarding school, not even if it was the most marvellous place in the world. *Couldn't* ? Is that the right way to look at it ? Of course not. That's wrong. That's not what an enlightened parent would say. You're thinking more of yourself than of the child, wanting your own happiness and pleasure. It's one thing when he's at the nursery school. You needn't worry :

you know he's well fed and looked after, and taken for walks, and taught the right things : and after that you can have your two hours or so with him before it's bedtime, to warm your heart. But when he's running about in the house-yard or the street all the time after school's over, what's going to be good about that ? What kind of talk will he hear ? What sort of friends will he make ? Look at Zoya's little boy. He's only in class 2, but you should hear the expressions he brings home from the streets !

No, Grishutka must go to boarding school. It'll be for his own good. He'll be with good teachers and school staff all day long. There'll be all sorts of things for him to do. . . . How can they build all those boarding schools so quickly ? It's not an easy job. Not if they're to be the proper sort of schools. Will there be enough places in the boarding schools, to begin with ? Such a lot of people really *have* to send their children there. You've got to help them out first. I've got my husband. He's a good man. Doesn't drink or anything like that. And I haven't got a large family, and we've got a nice place. So ? It's urgent. Grishutka's got to start school quite soon. Can't we think of some way out ? They find so many clever ways out nowadays, there must be an answer to this problem.

There is. Never mind whether or not you want to send Grishutka to boarding school or whether or not he can get a place. Grishutka must not be left to run wild with his key round his neck till you come home from work. Too many Grishutkas and Vasyutkas, to our shame, have run wild and created the problem of how to undo the damage. An answer has already been found to this problem that troubles thousands of mothers' hearts. A very simple and sensible answer. After-school groups in the schools. Where energetic, sympathetic and *live* people have set about organizing groups, it has worked very well. The Grishutkas are not left to their own devices while their fathers and mothers are at work. The head of the school decided to set aside a classroom or space of some kind for an after-school group, and did so. Where did he find it ? How was the miracle performed, with a school working two shifts a day ? He managed it by looking at the thing from the point of view of the fathers and mothers, and not from that of an official. He crowded someone up a bit here, he moved someone else over there, he built a piece on somewhere else, and he made the space. It may not be ideal, but at least Grishutka is not hanging round the streets ; till his mother comes home he is under the wing of the school ; he can have something to eat, do his lessons, and play. And his mother does not have to worry about him, so her work goes much better too.

At the end of the last school year I went round several Moscow schools where after-school groups are organised. How grateful the parents are for this *extended school day* ! In School No. 23, Frunze District, where the headmaster is Vasili Kirillovich Stepanov, there are six of these groups, comprising 135 children in all. They include not only children from the first, second and third classes, but girls and boys from classes 4, 5, 6, and even 7. The head has set aside two light, roomy classrooms where the children do their homework. The groups work in three shifts ; one will be preparing lessons indoors while the others are out for a walk or playing in the school yard. There are six teachers (all women) in charge of the groups. The parents pay twenty roubles a month for their children to belong to a group ; some children may attend without payment, and the Parents' Committee bears the cost. This committee is in charge of the finances. Part of the money goes to pay the teachers for their additional work, and part is spent on food. The children get a hot meal in the school canteen.

Anna Petrovna Ivanova, a member of the Parents' Committee, is the leading spirit in the organisation of the after-school groups. She gives a mother's care to her voluntary duties. Her own children are grown up ; her son is just

leaving the school, so she has no personal stake in the scheme. But when I heard her talking about the children in the groups I could feel how dear they were to her. There are the Grishin twins, whose father is disabled and whose mother works in a factory ; and Kolya Vorobyov, who has not got proper conditions for working quietly at home ; and Tanya Skalon, who used not to care for school but now looks on it as her second home ; and many others. There should be an Anna Petrovna on every Parents' Committee.

The after-school groups have a nannie of their own, Xenia. She does more than keep things tidy. She sees that the children wash their hands before eating ; she will sew on a button that has come off ; in short, she is always busy. A youngster may not have a granny at home, but he has one at school.

The teachers in charge tell me that all the children who attend the after-school groups are doing well in their lessons, even those who used not to. Not one child from the groups has been kept down for a second year in the same class ; not one has fallen under bad influences from the street. These facts should make the Ministries of Education and the financial authorities pause for thought. Every child who has to stay down for a second year costs the State a lot of money. And a record of no children having gone wrong is worth more than any amount of money.

There is no doubt that where the organisation of these groups, a business demanding a lot of time and trouble, has been undertaken in a spirit of real love for children it has been a success.

Take the Pavlik Morozov House of Culture, the club for the children of the spinners and weavers at the Tryokhgornaya Textile Works. This club has had an after-school group working all through the past school year. The club is not far from the school or from the children's homes, so it is sensible to organise supervision here while the parents are at work. It need not be a children's club that does such a thing. In a club for adults it is quite possible to set aside a comfortable corner for the children, as has been done by a VEF factory committee in Riga.

To come back to the Pavlik Morozov House of Culture. It is the last quarter of the school year. We are in a large, comfortable room.

Boris goes to school with the second shift, while first-former Tanya is in the morning one. She has just come straight from school. One might think they were brother and sister, and the woman talking to them their mother. But no ; she is Nadezhda Sergeyevna Volnova, chairman of the factory Children's Commission. Borya's mother is a spinner, while Tanya's mother is a weaver. Both mothers can work in peace, without worrying over what is happening to their children.

The after-school groups in this club were organised by the Works Committee. The children who attend school with the second shift come to the club first thing in the morning. They do their homework, then go out and play in the grounds. In spring-time they have balls, skipping-ropes and quoits at their disposal, and in winter sledges and spades. If it is wet or cold outside they paint or model and play draughts or dominoes. They are looked after by Klavdia Ivanovna Krylova, a member of the Children's Commission, and pioneer leaders Galya Alexeeva (a checker from the cotton fabrics section), Lyusya Merkulova (switchboard operator from a weaving shed) and Tamara Chekanova (from the dye-house). They all take turns conscientiously in their own free time at being on duty in the after-school group.

When the children had finished their preparation and been out to play, I saw Lyusya form them into single file and lead them off to the nearby factory canteen. In the canteen eight tables are set aside specially for the after-school group. The dinners are substantial three-course meals from a dietetic kitchen. Each mother pays thirty-nine roubles a month, and the works contributes the same amount per child from the director's fund. The children who go to school

with the first shift come straight from school to the club and are taken to the canteen, after which they go out to play and then do their homework. They stay in the group till six o'clock in the evening. The mothers are very satisfied with the arrangement.

After-school groups of this kind are in existence in Leningrad, Stalingrad, and other cities too. But as yet they are only a drop in the ocean. There should be such groups in every school in the coming school year. This can be achieved if the fate of Grishutka is a matter of concern not only to his mother and isolated enthusiasts among school heads and chairmen of Parents' Committees and Factory Committees. The whole staffs of Ministries of Education and town Education Offices, and all leading workers in party, trade union, local government or other organizations must become enthusiasts. The extended school day should be dealt with on a State scale, as boarding schools are being dealt with. We cannot rely solely on the efforts of public-spirited people and the material support of the parents. Everything must be done to prevent young Grishutka roaming the streets with his latch-key round his neck.

Grishutka cannot wait till we have built a sufficiency of well-appointed boarding schools. He cannot wait till his mother has thought the matter over and is at last prepared to send him to a boarding school. Not every mother will come to such a decision quickly.

After-school groups in every school are the desirable and practicable solution.

From PRAVDA, 19.8.56.

--Translated R.K.

II

Higher Education

V. V. Yelutin

USSR Minister for Higher Education

ENORMOUS numbers of trained men and women are going to be needed if we are to carry out the programme of economic and technical advance mapped out by the twentieth Congress. The sixth five-year plan provides for the training, in places of higher education, of one-and-a-half times as many specialists of various kinds as were trained during the years of the fifth plan, and twice as many in the case of personnel for heavy industry, building, transport and agriculture.

Our institutions of higher education are meeting the demand for specialists in the various fields of industry, science and culture, with a few exceptions (building, machine-building, instrument-making and some others). During the sixth five-year plan the required numbers of trained recruits will be provided for these branches also. The first year of the new plan is to see 265,000 young specialists going out to join in the productive life of the country.

It is the *quality* of the training given that must now be the special concern of those working in higher education. We must make sure that we send our students out armed with a knowledge of the latest achievements in Soviet and foreign science and technique, and we must bring academic training closer to practice and to the point of production. With this in mind, the weight given to laboratory work, to acquainting students with the practical use of the latest equipment and with the latest methods of research, is being increased. A further improvement in the conjunction between training and practical work must be achieved by raising the level of teaching in the factories, which is far from exemplary. The USSR Council of Ministers recently passed a new statute on practical work in industry for students at institutes of higher education.

This will ensure that the students gain practical knowledge and familiarity with current methods of work, in support of their theoretical studies, and will establish living contacts between higher education and industry. The largest and most modern establishments have already been designated as the bases for this industrial practice.

Under the new statute the student must do his practical work actually in an industrial establishment, beginning at the bottom and working up. At the same time he has to study a wide range of industrial subjects, including the organisation and economics of production as well as technological questions. The part played by the industrial side in students' practical work is also being given more importance; ways are being worked out of organising co-operation between the lecturers in the institutes and the engineers, foremen and skilled workers in the factories.

If the quality of the training given to students is to be improved, greater demands must be made on them, both on application for entry to places of higher education and in course of their studies. Under the new enrolment rules, as from this academic year priority will be given to applicants who since leaving secondary school have worked in industry or have served in the Army or Navy, so as to attract towards further training not only school-leavers but young people who already have some experience of life and practical work.

Higher training acquired by those already in industry without leaving their jobs is becoming more and more important. This too improves contacts between higher education and industry, and produces specialists with a good practical background. Suffice it to say that out of the 440,000 new students accepted by places of higher education this year, 215,000 are studying without leaving their jobs. An extension of facilities for extra-mural and evening study is urgently needed, to help those who in practice are already specialists, but have no formal higher training, to gain appropriate qualifications. It should also be borne in mind that, as universal full secondary education becomes the rule everywhere, there will be an ever-increasing number of school-leavers going into jobs rather than proceeding to full-time education. More extra-mural facilities will make it possible to satisfy the demand from this quarter for further training.

Certain new evening institutes recently organised are now functioning very well—the Machine-Building Institute in Molotov, the Aviation Technology Institute in Shcherbakov, and the Polytechnic in Komsomolsk-on-Amur. The Molotov institute is about to open a department for external students. Evening sections are being organised within leading institutes in large industrial centres, such as Zlatoust and Kadievka. In the immediate future the training of external students without interrupting their work in industry is to be very widely developed in the eastern areas.

The quality of higher training of this type is also receiving great attention. More ways must be found of making direct contact between students and teachers, of bringing in the best available teachers for this kind of work. This sector merits attention every bit as careful as that paid to work with full-time internal students.

The twentieth Congress stressed the need to give young engineers and agronomists a sufficient knowledge of the real day-to-day economics and organisation of production. This calls for a far-reaching reorganisation of the whole system of teaching economics to students of other subjects. These practical questions of economics will be dealt with not only by lecturers specialising in the economics of the particular industry concerned, but also by lecturers on political economy and by those giving the various specialised courses. Attention to practical economics must be a constant theme, stressed in all courses, in the student's work on his thesis, and during his industrial practice.

In recent years we have at last succeeded in making real progress in pro-

viding good text-books for higher education courses, a point of exceptional importance as far as raising the quality of training is concerned. In 1953-5 text-books and other aids to study were planned and published to the total number of 888. Plans for 1957-60 envisage the publication of 1,865 different titles. These will provide a good basis for most disciplines ; it should, however, be noted that a number of important subjects (practical economics, recent technical innovations, and some others) lack such books. Production has been allowed to drag on with intolerable delays. The creation of new text-books demands a great deal of initiative and organisational work on the part of professors, their staffs and the authors, and unless this is forthcoming the work will not be done to the standard needed and within the time-limits set.

Higher education is linked with industry not only by the fact that it prepares trained workers, but also by its research work. Unfortunately, there have been and still are serious shortcomings in the scientific work done, for which we are quite rightly criticised. An example of what can and should be achieved in this direction is the contribution made by the scientists of the Moscow Petroleum Institute to the technology of petroleum extraction. The new methods they suggested on the basis of their theoretical research are making it possible to avoid the decline in productivity usual with wells that have been in exploitation for some time. These methods have meant a saving of over 3,000 million roubles in the Tuimazov oilfield (Bashkiria) alone, and additional production of millions of tons of oil. The USSR Council of Ministers, recognising the importance of drawing into active research work the whole contingent, 100,000 or so strong, of professors and lecturers in teaching institutes, recently passed a special decree on *Measures to Improve Research in Higher Educational Institutions*. This decree indicates that the choice of theoretical problems to be worked on should be conditioned by the speeding-up of technical progress in all branches of the national economy.

A number of scientific conferences have been held during 1956, with the aim of activating scientists in teaching establishments. These conferences have brought together people working in industry, in the Academies of Sciences and in the specialised training institutes. One such conference, on the cultivation of maize, summed up the work of the past year in various teaching institutes and made it clear that the scientists had carried through a number of important research projects and gained useful results with reference to the cultivation of this crop in different areas. Recently there was a conference on the latest techniques in the oil industry. Similar conferences have taken place on other branches of science and technology ; one in Gorky on radio-electronics, and one in Leningrad on standard design and industrialisation of building, for instance. Others include conferences on modern techniques of welding metals and alloys (in the Bauman Higher Technical College, Moscow) ; on the use of oxygen in the iron and steel industry (in the Moscow Steel Institute) ; and on the electrification and automation of mining operations (Leningrad Mining Engineering Institute) ; and so on.

Such a general exchange of views among academic and practical workers helps to make clear what are the most important and pressing problems, and to concentrate the necessary material and mental resources on tackling them. One such key problem is the further development of automation and telemechanics. The Ministry of Higher Education has in recent years considerably extended the amount of research done in this field. In some establishments the intention is to create special research laboratories working on automation and telemechanics, with a permanent staff of qualified scientists.

A very important factor determining the quality of research work done is correct planning. On this we have been found sadly wanting. Inter-institutional conferences will help us to bring about an improvement. From this year onward the Ministry of Higher Education must consider and approve or reject the

plans for all major research and design projects, and for introducing into industrial practice the methods, designs, and so on, resulting from research. This will be done in collaboration with the Ministries for the various branches of industry.

The research projects approved for 1956 show a rise in the research activities on problems of importance to the national economy. Work is, for instance, to be done on semi-conductors, on the use of oxygen in the iron and steel industry, on radiochemistry and the atomic nucleus, on problems of modern lathe construction, on methods of raising the yields from various agricultural crops, and on the chemistry and technology of high-molecular compounds.

Excellent close contact with research workers in higher education has been established by the Ministry of the Oil Industry. A programme of research covering a wide range of questions has been drawn up by our research workers, in collaboration with representatives of the Ministry of Instrument-making and Automation Devices. The Ministries of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy, Iron and Steel, Coal Mining, Geology and Preservation of Mineral Resources, and a number of others, are all actively helping to develop contacts with higher educational establishments.

Widening the range of problems dealt with by research workers in teaching establishments means that it becomes very necessary to give these the requisite material conditions, to equip their laboratories with the most modern apparatus. This is also very important for training students. We are making it possible for this to be done by letting Ministries and departments set up research laboratories attached to teaching institutes and hand existing research establishments over to them. Higher educational establishments are, moreover, to receive experimental and other new models of all sorts of machines, instruments and other apparatus, for testing and for use in research and teaching; no charge is to be made for the use of this equipment. In the course of the next two years large-scale laboratories equipped with the very latest apparatus are to be organised within the major teaching institutes, and these will be working on the problems most urgent for the development of science and industry.

The rights of directors of higher educational establishments have been extended. They may now utilise up to 50 per cent of the revenue they receive for successful completion of commissioned research projects to extend and improve the material equipment of their establishments.

The development of research work in teaching establishments is essential if the training of students is to be raised to the level demanded by present-day scientific and technical progress.

One measure which will be of great assistance is the abolition of the existing system of assessing and paying for teaching work, and the introduction of definite rules on the numbers of permanent staff to be appointed. From the next academic year the numbers of departmental staff maintained will be based on an average number of students per member of teaching staff. Strict limits will be set to the amount of work which may be undertaken by staff in different places at the same time. Teaching work in one higher educational establishment by staff members of another such establishment will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances, where it is necessary for the proper conduct of courses. At the same time, heads of teaching institutes will do all they can to encourage their staffs to engage in other work in industry, in industrial research centres, design offices, experimental stations, clinics, technical boards, and so on. Everything possible will be done to bring into teaching work specialists whose main employment is in industry, agriculture, transport, research establishments, and so on.

Another problem needing prompt attention is how best to reorganise and improve ideological work, that is the teaching of social sciences and all activities directed at social and moral education. At the twentieth Congress there

was justified criticism of the political education and training in Marxist-Leninist theory provided in places of higher education.

A number of measures are being taken to correct this state of affairs. As from the start of the new academic year, there will be three courses on social sciences and economics in all higher educational establishments throughout the country : the history of the CPSU ; political economy : dialectical and historical materialism. The way these courses are presented will vary, however, in that the amount of time devoted to one or other of them will be different in institutes of different types, though the total amount of time allowed for the social sciences will remain the same as at present. New curricula are being worked out.

All these challenges and demands for a higher level of work are finding an appropriate response among both staff and students.

Slightly abridged from PRAVDA, 7.7.56.

Translated R.K.

III

Labour Reserve Training

A. Bordadyn

Deputy Head, Central Board of Labour Reserves

THE tasks set by the twentieth Congress demand an improvement in the work of training skilled workers. Industry and building need new personnel capable of consistently raising the level of technique and productivity.

There are many channels for training manpower for transport, industry, building and agriculture, through the Labour Reserve system and through organised recruitment and public appeals for workers for the most important enterprises and construction jobs.

Organised recruitment provides mainly unskilled labour, but at the present stage the need is for highly skilled personnel, and to train these recruits is the function of the Labour Reserves* (founded in 1940), with their wide network of schools and colleges. They have made it possible to train the necessary numbers of skilled workers and direct them to where they are needed.

The Labour Reserve scheme has already trained more than 8,000,000 young workers, and in the sixth five-year plan another 3,500,000 are to be provided.

In 1947-8, when there was an acute need for manpower in the mining industry, the LR turned out 690,000 skilled workers in eighteen months or two years, and thereby enabled the first post-war five-year plan in this industry to be fulfilled.

The 1953 plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU called for skilled agricultural mechanisers. Since the beginning of 1954, 900 special schools have been turning out such workers : in two and a half years 842,000 have been sent to the farms and tractor stations. The demand is not yet being fully met.

The 1955 plenum (January) called for the training of farm workers for more highly skilled work in agriculture, by agreement between such workers and the authorities.

Since 1954 a new type of educational establishment has come into being—technical colleges for training young people leaving the ten-year schools as junior technical personnel. According to the sixth five-year plan, 550,000 young people are to complete such courses.

With the rising tempo of industrial production in the eastern regions, new technical schools are to be provided there. Of 1,000 new LR schools envisaged

* See SOVIET EDUCATION BULLETIN, Vol. III, No. 2 (April 1956).

in the sixth five-year plan, 80 per cent will be in Siberia, Kazakhstan, the far east and the far north. Specialists for these areas will also be trained in the existing schools in the central regions. In 1954-5, 106,000 skilled workers had already been sent there.

But there are many shortcomings and problems.

The gigantic stepping-up of building means an ever-increasing demand for skilled builders. In the fifth five-year plan 880,000 left the schools and colleges ; in the sixth, more than 1,000,000 are to be trained ; but this is not enough. The Ministries concerned have not carried out the Government's decisions concerning the building and equipping of schools. In 1955, sixty-two were built instead of 106 ; and in the first half of 1956 only fifty building schools were completed, out of 265 planned for the year.

The Ministries of Building for the metal and chemical industry and for the coal industry have not completed a single school ; the plan was for fifty-four and thirty respectively. The Ministry of Town and Country Building set up only two schools in the first quarter of 1956, out of thirty-three planned. The Central Board of Labour Reserves is not doing enough to overcome this time-lag.

The network of vocational colleges for school-leavers must be extended without delay. It is estimated that in 1956 there will be 897,000 pupils from seven-year schools and 744,00 from ten-year schools to be placed in jobs, apart from those proceeding to tekhnikums, universities and institutes.

The LR schools have established themselves as the basic method of training and replenishing manpower. Improving the quality of instruction and lengthening the training period is now a matter of urgency.

New building techniques demand a two-year training. A two-year course is also needed in agricultural mechanisation, to give a wider training to tractor and machine specialists who can do repairs and work on labour-saving mechanisation in animal husbandry. They should also learn a building trade, to ensure jobs for themselves throughout the year.

In the trade schools, the course should be extended to three or four years to keep pace with technical progress. It was a mistake to have shortened the course at the technical colleges : students taking the earlier and longer course were better prepared for productive work.

New specialities are arising ; for instance, we need workers for computing and analysing machines, but none are being trained.

Syllabuses, text-books, visual aids and teaching methods must be overhauled. This is no easy task, since the schools are training personnel in nearly 700 trades.

Equipment must be improved. It is no secret that out of 40,000 metal-cutting machines in school workshops half are out of date. Yet the pupils themselves are turning out 6,000 metal-cutting machines a year. These should be used to replace the antiquated ones. Schools of agricultural mechanisation get the latest tractors and machines. This should apply to all technical schools.

There must be mass preparation of visual aids on modern technique, as is done at Trade School No. 5, Taganrog. The initiative and inventiveness of the pupils must be encouraged (as at Omsk Technical College). Many technical problems are being solved with great boldness and originality by the students themselves.

The organisation of practical production work must be radically improved.

In the general raising of the level of training, the craftsmen-instructors and teachers are the decisive factor. They must be helped to master new techniques and develop their skill as teachers.

Not long ago the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR created two new titles of honour, those of Honoured Craftsman-Instructor in technical education and Honoured Teacher in technical education. These will be

awarded to instructors, teachers and inspectors who are outstandingly successful in training young people.

There are also serious weaknesses in individual and team methods of training on the job. The standard of teaching is low, and the scheme produces workers with no high degree of skill or knowledge of technics and technology. An investigation into the scheme at 460 industrial enterprises confirms this.

The workers who are taking this on-the-spot training are not included in the total of productive workers, and some economists therefore regard them as a hidden reserve of manpower, over and above the plan, for carrying out productive work. Thus it is to the interest of industrial enterprises to maintain a larger number of such students than they really need.

As a rule, such training is rough and ready, and older workers are often selected rather than young people. After reaching the grade of skilled worker, they often fail to achieve the working norm, get low wages, and drift away from the job. This is understandable, for the instructors are often insufficiently trained and there is a lack of supervision as regards adherence to the curriculum and syllabuses.

That is why it has become urgent to get this system in order and to apply State control, drawing on the LR system to help solve the problem.

The planned training and allocation of labour resources is of great national and political importance. It can and must be improved by rapidly and correctly tackling the problems, which have become acute.

Abstracted from PRAVDA, 20.8.56.

Translated C.E.S.

BOARDING SCHOOLS IN THE USSR

Deana Levin

OF course, the family and the school have been and remain the most important centres of socialist education of the children. . . . But we cannot restrict ourselves to this. . . . Children should be enrolled in these boarding schools only at the request of their parents. They will live in the schools, and their parents will see them on holidays, during vacations or after school hours. . . . It is difficult to overestimate the immense importance of this system of education."

These extracts from N. S. Khrushchov's speech on February 14, 1956, were the first indications we had of the intention of the Soviet Government to organise boarding schools as an important part of the Soviet educational system, and during my visit to Moscow in August I made it my business to find out as much as possible about them.

I discussed the matter with Soviet educationists, teachers and parents, and found them all in agreement that boarding schools were a good thing. However, a few parents were quite definite that their children would live at home and go to a day school.

Both Professor Melnikov, Secretary-Academician of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, and Mr. I. Grivkov, president of the Teachers' Union of the RSFSR, insisted that boarding schools as envisaged in the Soviet Union were part of a new stage in the development of Soviet education and not a mere expedient to deal with immediate problems. They said that boarding schools would ensure that children had an all-round education and a training in good habits and manners, and would provide the proper physical conditions for healthy development. The daily time-table would provide for fresh air and exercise as well as for free-time activities. Bedtimes and meals would be regular and appropriate to the ages of the children. There would also be opportunities for studying music and foreign languages in addition to the periods in the school time table; tuition and musical instruments would be provided for those who wished.

These schools will give the children a consistent education and upbringing, and will avoid the clash of conflicting demands often made by parents and teachers; this will be a step forward in socialist education.

Soviet parents, especially those in the cities and large towns, consider the opening of boarding schools as a solution to their serious problem of how to bring up their children in the difficult housing situation which still exists. Many families live in one room; there is no proper place for the children to keep their personal belongings, nor can they do their homework in a quiet atmosphere. Bedtimes depend on the adults' rather than the children's needs. In the case of the family where both parents are working, the younger school child comes home in the early afternoon to an empty flat, and has no one to control him or see that he has regular meals. This problem is now being solved by schools having an "extended" day.

The 285 boarding schools opened in the Soviet Union this autumn are being run on an experimental basis, and heads and staff have been selected for their experience and known good qualities.

I visited boarding school No. 10 (in the Kiev district of Moscow, from which all the pupils are drawn). This was formerly an ordinary day school and has been temporarily transformed into a boarding school for 150 boys and girls from seven to twelve years of age (classes 1 to 5, with thirty pupils in a class). These children will remain in the school until they matriculate from the tenth

class, but this year it was considered unwise to take adolescents who had not previously been to a boarding school.

A new building will be completed next year near this one, and the school will then take in its full complement of 600 children.

The teachers in this school (and others) work normal hours and are not resident. The head of the school has a small flat there, but she will usually go home, too. She has a family of her own. Each class of thirty pupils has, in addition to the ordinary form teacher, two people who are called in Russian "educators" or "upbringers". They are qualified teachers; one will be in charge of the children from the time they get up in the morning until school time, and the other takes on after school hours, staying until bed-time.

At night each group of dormitories is looked after by a night-attendant, whose duty it is to see that the dormitories are properly aired, that the children do not uncover themselves and that all is in order.

There are about a dozen children to a dormitory. They make their own beds and sweep out their rooms. The platforms are well provided with books and toys, and the children also bring their own treasures. There were dolls and teddy-bears sitting on the pillows of many beds.

The children have five meals a day, at small tables in a dining room. Table-cloths and flowers make it gay, and good table manners are considered important.

Homework is done regularly in the classrooms, under the supervision of the "educators". There are volley-ball pitches and a running-track in the grounds, and the children will lay out and look after the gardens.

Every child in the school has been given a new school uniform, another set of clothes to wear after lessons, and "best" clothes for special occasions. They have also been given coats, shoes and house-slippers.

Half the children do not pay any fees at all, and at this school the most paid by any parent is fifty roubles a month. This means that the children are drawn from the homes of lower-paid workers, as the highest fees of 400 roubles a month are paid by those earning 2,000 or more roubles a month. Fees are based on the earnings of parents, the number of children in the family, and other factors.

The children of school No. 10 were chosen from several thousand applicants on the grounds that they were either semi-orphans, came from large families in poor housing conditions, or came from a family where both parents were working and there was no one at home to look after them.

The school has a parents' committee which will meet regularly and, especially during the experimental period, discuss the set-up and make suggestions for its improvement. As the parents all live near the school, it will be easy for their children to go home on Sundays and special occasions. There is a pleasant reception room at the school for parents, and there will be regular meetings between them and the teachers.

The school doctor and nurse will play an active part in the life of the school (as in fact they do in day-schools), and they are planning to keep detailed records of the health and development of each child.

At present it is very difficult for an outside observer of Soviet boarding schools to make any definite conclusions about them. There is no doubt that for large numbers of children life in a boarding school will be much better than in a crowded home, especially as they will not be too far away for frequent and regular visits to their families. Whether Soviet parents will think the same way in the future it is difficult to say; with the far shorter working hours envisaged in ten or fifteen years' time, as a result of mechanisation and automation, they may feel that they can give their children the conditions they need at home. Time will show.

SOVIET TRADE UNION PROBLEMS: THEORY AND PRACTICE

The following article from the leading Soviet theoretical and political journal critically discusses the work of the trade unions of the USSR in the light of debates and decisions at the twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

AMONG the voluntary organisations of the working people the Soviet trade unions have a particularly important place. They represent the virtually all-embracing organisation of a working class in power. It is sufficient to say that they number more than 45,000,000 members. Organising nearly all the manual and clerical workers, engineering, technical and scientific personnel, the trade unions play an active part in the social and political life of the USSR : and particularly in the development of socialist democracy. They put forward their candidates in elections to all State authorities, up to and including the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and help to work out the State plans of economic and cultural development, as well as all labour legislation. Of tremendous importance are the numerous forms of voluntary activity of the workers which are characteristic of the trade unions. The social insurance delegates alone number 1,300,000, the voluntary factory inspectors 1,100,000, the cultural organisers (volunteers) 1,100,000,¹ the public controllers of canteens and workers' shops 442,000². About 5,000,000 trade unionists are members of various sub-committees of the factory and works committees³—production, wages, invention and rationalisation, housing and welfare, allotments, etc. The total army of trade union voluntary workers, numbering 16,000,000, gives reality to the principle of the working people participating in State and public affairs through their trade unions.

One cannot overestimate the contribution of the Soviet trade unions to the development of industry. They rally their members to solve the essential problems of further industrial development, by raising labour productivity on the basis of technical advance. They develop socialist emulation, spreading information about advanced experience. The trade unions do a tremendous job in social insurance ; they have to defend the material and spiritual interests of their members. Foremost in their work is the education of the masses in a communist attitude to labour, and the raising of their cultural level and technical knowledge.

They do not stand aside either from the task, common to the whole people, of bringing about a big advance in agriculture. One considerable section of trade unionists—those working in the State farms and machine and tractor stations—are in the front line of the struggle to increase agricultural output. Trade union organisations in the industrial centres played a direct part in selecting workers for the collective farms, tractor stations and new State farms in the virgin and long-fallow territories.⁴

¹ Each "trade union group"—the workers engaged in the same section or department, or on adjacent machines, to a total of up to fifty—elects from its midst one of each of these unpaid officials.—ED.

² These volunteers are nominated by works or shop committees, for supervisory work in their free time.—ED.

³ Elected at general meetings of trade unionists in each factory, these represent the basic organisation of the particular union catering for the industry concerned. They divide their work among sub-committees, composed of their own members reinforced by volunteers.—ED.

⁴ The membership of the union catering for the State farm, tractor station and State purchasing network is over 6,000,000.—ED.

It can be said with certainty that not a single important economic or political problem in the country is solved without the help of the trade unions.

The role of the trade unions after the victory of the socialist revolution was fully expressed in Lenin's formula : "A school of management, a school of economic administration, a school of communism." This definition was made at the beginning of the 1920s,⁵ when the Communist Party was determining the main directions of its trade union activity in conditions of a working class in power, and in tense struggle against the Trotskyists, Bukharinites and other hostile groups. But it remains fully valid for the present stage—the building of a communist society—as well. Of course, the content of Lenin's definition has become much richer and more many-sided than in his day, which is comprehensible when we consider what a lengthy road the trade unions of the USSR have covered during the last thirty-five years.

There was at one time the mistaken view that after the victory of socialism the part which the trade unions can play diminishes, and that they "have no place", have "nothing to do", etc. Such fundamentally erroneous views did great damage to the work of the trade unions, and led to many trade union bodies narrowing the scope of their activities and losing a sense of urgency in defending the interests of their members.

It is regrettable that even today one occasionally comes across this kind of argument. In essence it means renouncing Lenin's definition of the place of the trade unions in the struggle for a communist society, and underestimating what they can do in economic and cultural constructive work. One of the reasons for the appearance of such views was the "cult of the individual",⁶ the inevitable consequence of which was a limitation of the independent activity of the masses, a depreciation of the role of the mass organisations of the working people, including the trade unions. The fact that such views can still be encountered shows how little the theory of the role of the trade unions, in a period when communist society is being built, has been studied. It is a fact that during the last twenty years not a single work of any importance has been published which makes a scientific examination of, and draws general conclusions from, the work of the Soviet trade unions in the successive stages which follow the victory of the socialist revolution—the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, and then the period of completion of the structure of socialism and a gradual advance to communism. True, in 1955 the staff at the Moscow Trade Union College⁷ published a text-book : *The History of the Trade Union Movement in the USSR*. This first attempt to throw light on the vast experience of Soviet trade unions merits approval ; yet it suffers from considerable defects. Many questions are set out in it superficially, as a mere list of events and facts, without any analysis or conclusions. Nor does the great experience of the Soviet trade unions meet with any profound study in the periodical press, including that of the trade unions. Such a situation cannot be considered normal.

The Communist Party takes as its point of departure that, as the advance to communism progresses, the role of the trade unions which train up and draw millions of people into the building of the new society is not reduced, but on the contrary increases. As a consequence, their activity should not decline, it should grow. Why ? Because, as communist society develops, more and more depends on the independent activity of the masses, the liberation of their creative energies and initiative, the drawing of ever new millions of

⁵ Speech of December 30, 1920 (*Selected Works*, 12-vol. edition. Vol. 9, p. 4).—ED.

⁶ I.e. the hero-worship of Stalin, extended to others placed in authority.

⁷ Ranking as a higher educational establishment.—ED.

working people into conscious constructive effort. Without the trade unions this cannot be achieved.

Without far-reaching improvement in the work of the trade unions no successful solution of the growing and ever more complex problems in the economic and cultural spheres can be found, or the material and technical basis of communism created. It was just because of this that the work of the Soviet trade unions was subjected to very acute examination at the twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.⁸ The Congress criticised the considerable defects in that work, and called for a big expansion of the part played by the trade unions in the building of communist society.

The struggle to fulfil the production plans and participation in management of the national economy are the best school for educating the masses in the spirit of communism, raising their public spirit and improving their organisation and discipline. Long ago the eleventh Congress of the Party⁹ adopted as a guiding principle Lenin's proposition¹⁰: "Being a school of communism in general, the trade unions should in particular be a school for training the whole mass of workers, and eventually all working people, in the art of managing socialist industry (and thereafter gradually agriculture as well)." At the present time the problem of a wider participation of the masses in the management of production is of particular urgency.

It cannot be doubted that in a country where the people are the sole owners of all social wealth the democratic principle of management of all affairs, including the economy, is the only right one. This is not in conflict with the one-man management of individual factories, which the State entrusts to a single person performing his function in the interests of the people. One-man management is an unshakable principle in production; but it must not be forgotten that in Soviet conditions the director of a factory, the shop manager or the foreman cannot work successfully without relying on the collective, without enjoying the confidence of the workers, without having that moral authority which impels people to obey, not only because of an order but consciously and with conviction. The manager is responsible, both to society and to that part of it which is the collective body of workers in his factory, for the correct and skilful management of the enterprise entrusted to him. He is in duty bound to reckon with the will of that collective. One-man management without supervision by the masses degenerates into mere administrative authority, hostile to the spirit of socialism and in contradiction to the principle of democratic centralism.

Everyday practice more and more urgently raises the question of involving the working people on the widest possible scale in the management of production, making the organs of management still more democratic, constantly enlarging the part played by the workers in all forms of supervision from below. At the present stage of the building of a communist society, this will make it possible to bring into action new and incalculable reserves in the struggle to put economic plans into effect and to eliminate the signs of bureaucracy which still make themselves felt in many managerial bodies. In this sphere a prominent part belongs to the trade unions.

The Soviet trade unions have tried-and-tested methods of drawing the workers into the management of economy, many forms of supervision from below. First and foremost come the production conferences¹¹—that simplest and most primary form in which the workers display their activities and ensure the use of their experience, remarks and proposals. The production confer-

⁸ In February 1956.—ED.

⁹ March—April 1922.—ED.

¹⁰ January 1922 (*Selected Works*, 4-volume edition, 1951, vol. II, part 2, p. 619).—ED.

¹¹ These first appeared in 1923. An account of their working is given in Rothstein, *Map and Plan in Soviet Economy* (1948), pp. 100-111.

ences are invaluable because those who take part in them are the people actually standing at the bench, managing the machines, smelting iron and steel—the creators of material values. These people have to bear the consequences of all miscalculations and defects in the management of production, and are best able to suggest how to correct them and what reserves to bring into action. The role of production conferences as forums for advanced experience is great. They exercise a collective and public educative influence on the workers at all levels.

Unfortunately it has to be admitted that in many factories the part played by production conferences has declined, and the very idea of these conferences has been distorted and made bureaucratic. Thus in a number of factories in the Smolensk Region, instead of production conferences, there were practised until quite recently "planning talks", at which representatives of the management "pepped up" the workers. Again and again one finds business managers taking a bureaucratic attitude to criticism coming from the floor of the production conference, or ignoring it, and ignoring too the businesslike propositions made by those present.¹² It is not surprising that, where this happens, production conferences become feeble and cease to enjoy authority among the workers.

A most important task of the trade unions is raising the standard of the production conferences, and making them a genuine form of participation by the workers in the management of production. For this it is necessary that they should discuss problems of production which are worrying the collective, and, above all, problems of technical progress, inventions and rationalisation, raising the productivity of labour, reducing costs of production, making use of reserves and improving the intelligent use of machinery. Another and no less important side of their work is to become an effective form of supervision of the management by the shop or works collective, so that those in charge should answer to the collective for mismanagement of production. It is appropriate, for example, that the production conferences should hear reports from those in charge of the Inventions Bureaux on their examination and implementation of proposals made by the workers and technical personnel.

It has now become necessary not only to use to the full, and to perfect, the existing means of drawing workers into the management of economy (including factory meetings and production conferences), but also to work out new forms in which the representatives of the collectives can take part in the work of economic bodies from top to bottom, from Ministry to shop. These forms may be varied. What is important is that they should ensure on a broad democratic basis the genuine participation of the working people's collectives in solving the main problems of production. This would draw thousands upon thousands of advanced workers, engineers and technicians into more systematic and effective participation in management, and would thereby help to train new staffs of Soviet administrators and managers, so necessary for the greatly expanding socialist economy. It is hardly necessary to demonstrate that such further expansion of mass supervision is a reliable means of cleansing our economic machinery of elements of bureaucracy, and of strengthening the principle of democratic centralism in the management of production.

The services rendered by the trade unions in the development of socialist emulation¹³ are beyond question.

¹² The annual reports of the Central Statistical Department show that practical suggestions "from the floor" which have been adopted successfully in the Soviet economy run into several millions.—ED.

¹³ Rivalry between individual workers, teams, departments or sections and whole factories, collective farms, etc., in producing more efficiently and at lower cost in labour or materials. The principles are discussed by Lenin in *Selected Works*, 4-volume edition (1951), vol. II, part 1, pp. 367-377; part 2, pp. 213-239.—ED.

Yet the serious failings in this great and important work must be stressed first and foremost. Even now, in spite of constant reminders, such a major defect as the tendency to make emulation official and bureaucratic has not yet been overcome. Some regional committees and union executives reduce their guidance of socialist emulation to attempts at forcing the creative activity of those engaged in it into rigidly conceived schemes and forms, paper summaries and reports they have themselves invented, sometimes within the four walls of a trade union office. Such trade union officials attempt to "mobilise" the workers by means of circulars, acting not as organisers of the masses but as bad administrators. Emulation is the creative affair of the workers themselves—it requires publicity and comparison of results. Where is the publicity when, as in many State farms and machine and tractor stations of the Kuibyshev Region, the director himself draws up the results of emulation on his own, without any participation by the job committee or active trade unionist, or the mass of the membership?

Socialist emulation daily produces improvements in the methods and processes of labour. Advanced production experience is the national property. Its wide dissemination considerably accelerates advance. Unfortunately many trade union organisations still do this very feebly, again on account of the officialdom and formalism that have undermined their practice. As a result, the innumerable cases of initiative displayed by advanced workers often do not produce the effect they might, were they supported and extended everywhere.

The strength of socialist emulation is that all its participants should not only fulfil but over-fulfil the quotas of output¹⁴, should master new methods and should learn to squeeze the maximum possible results from technique. Some works committees, regional committees and union executives forget this, and concern themselves only with the most advanced workers, making a great fuss over their valuable initiative and the high labour productivity they have reached. Yet side by side with the innovators there are also workers who do not always fulfil the output quotas. Very rarely as yet does a trade union body take an interest in why many workers in a factory play no active part in emulation. Yet it would be useful to find out the cause. Let every factory, works or shop committee set itself the modest task of helping the semi-skilled to master the methods used by the most skilled. Let every one of our 1,000,000 trade union groups ensure that in their corner of the shop, or in the shop itself, all the workers fulfil their output quota. It is difficult even to estimate what a vast economic effect this would have on the country as a whole.

The more strongly the trade unions influence the whole economic life of the country, and the more actively they put up to the Government and to the economic bodies¹⁵ questions which have become essential and urgent, the better do they play their part as a school of communism. Such questions arise at every turn. Everyone knows, for example, how many defects we still have in the regulation of output quotas and wages. These defects infringe the principle of the material interest of the worker in production, and thus retard the raising of labour productivity. There have been factories where output quotas were reviewed by "campaign" methods, without improving the technology and organisation of production. The workers' suggestions and wishes were not considered—and the trade union organisations put up with it. Today there is a drive for a radical improvement in this sphere in the factories; but it should be remembered that it will be successful only if the working men and

¹⁴ Output quotas in Soviet industry—per unit of time worked—are fixed jointly by trade unions and managements.—ED.

¹⁵ I.e. the Ministries (each main branch of industry, agriculture and economic life generally in the USSR is planned by a separate Ministry) and State planning organisations.—ED.

women and technical staff play an active part. This is the job of the trade union organisations.

In present conditions Lenin's remark that "the trade unions must take a far greater part in all the planning organisations of the proletarian State"¹⁶ is particularly apt. At the production level attained today the role of planning is extremely great, and miscalculations have a serious effect on the normal working of factories and their fulfilment of their socialist obligations. How costly are continuous alterations in the factories' quarterly and annual plans by the departments in charge of them at the Ministries concerned! How bad is the effect of mismanagement of material supplies to the factories! To raise these and similar matters, and insist on the elimination of the defects, is the duty of the trade union organisations both central and local.

Everybody knows how much is being done to improve the living standards of the Soviet people. Quite recently there has been the new Pensions Law, rightly considered by the people to be a striking expression of concern for the working man; there was the decision of the Party, Government, and Central Council of Trade Unions on raising the wages of the lower-paid workers. Vast housing and cultural building schemes are under construction. It is important that all these measures should not be retarded, or remain on paper, owing to the slackness of individual managers, or to bureaucratic distortions in the machinery of State. Here the role of the trade unions is particularly important.

In the Soviet Union the trade unions (as the mass organisation of the working class) and managements (as representatives of the State) are not opposed to each other: their aim is the same—the building of communist society¹⁷. But this does not mean that the trade union organisations do not have such functions as the defence of the economic and legal interests of their members; in Soviet conditions these are functions binding on the trade union, without which it cannot in just measure play its part. This entirely corresponds to the views of Marxism—Leninism on the role and tasks of trade unions after the victory of socialist revolution. Lenin pointed out that when Soviet power exists "the trade unions have lost their basis in the *class* economic struggle, but have by no means lost, and unfortunately for many years to come cannot lose, their basis in the *non-class* 'economic struggle', in the sense of the struggle against bureaucratic distortions of the Soviet machinery, in the sense of the protection of the material and spiritual interests of the mass of working people by ways and means beyond the capacity of that machinery, etc."¹⁸

And in fact our country has trained remarkable cadres of economic managers, devoted to the interests of the people, combining the struggle to fulfil production plans with attentiveness to the material and welfare needs of the workers. At the same time we are bound to recognise the existence of a narrowly managerial approach on the part of some of them. Responsible workers who give priority to an incorrectly understood principle of the profitability of the enterprise are prepared to "economise" on expenditure for improving working conditions, for the sake of showing a surplus. There are plenty of business managers who evade the need to build houses and welfare institutions, on the ground that this has nothing to do with production, it is allegedly secondary and can wait, and "the most important thing is the plan".

Nor can we forget that in the Soviet public service and the economic organisations there are expressions—by no means outlived yet—of bureaucracy

¹⁶ *Selected Works*, 4-volume edition (1951), vol. II, part 2, p. 620.—ED.

¹⁷ See, for much the same point made by responsible British trade unionists, *Russia* (report of the TUC delegation to Russia, 1924), pp. 136, 142-3, 147, 151-2; and *A Visit to Russia* (report of Durham Miners, 1937), pp. 38-9, 43-4.—ED.

¹⁸ This is quoted from Lenin's article, *Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin*, January 25, 1921 (*Selected Works*, 12-volume edition, vol. IX, p. 73: the translation there is not entirely satisfactory).—ED.

and a harsh, soulless attitude to the workers. We need not hide the fact that there are still plenty of bureaucrats and officials who obstruct the fulfilment of Soviet laws, ostensibly (oddly enough) to ensure their exact fulfilment. For example, the worker has to receive his special working clothes¹⁹: the office bureaucrat does not refuse them, but surrounds the issue with such formalities that an inexperienced worker either fails to get what he is entitled to by law or is obliged to spend a lot of valuable time in doing so.

It was against all such wrong occurrences, alien to the nature of the Soviet State, that Lenin called on the Soviet trade unions to carry on a non-class "economic struggle". It must frankly be said that many trade unions carry on that struggle with insufficient stubbornness, because they themselves in many cases underestimate their functions as defenders of the interests of the working people. As the report of the Central Committee to the twentieth congress said, "trade unions have ceased to argue with managers, peace and quiet reign between them".

Some trade union leaders take refuge in the assertion that the trade unions are not entitled to dismiss a manager. But of course the question is not that trade union bodies are not entitled to do so. The problem is that they do not know how to use the most effective force in Soviet conditions—the force of public opinion. Facts show that the trade unions, if they rely on the will of the collective and raise their questions boldly and as a matter of principle, do in fact defend the interests of their members and combat the bureaucrats, the arrogant officials and the managers with a narrow business approach.

We may quote, for example, the action of the Central Council of the Trade Unions against the breaches of safety regulations by the management of the Lvov Tip-lorry Works. With the passive acceptance of the works trade union committee, the management had ignored its duty of improving working conditions. New shops had been brought into operation with serious defects in regulations, sanitary and welfare arrangements. Overtime had been practised in the works without registration and without the appropriate payment.

The trade union meeting at the works discussed the resolution of the Secretariat of the Central Council of Trade Unions for two days. The discussion was exceptionally sharp and criticism of the defects acute. The meeting unanimously recognised that it was impossible for the director of the works, comrade Nikanorov, to remain in his job, and requested the Ministry for the Automobile Industry to take a decision on this question²⁰. The voice of the workers will undoubtedly find support. Bureaucrats who ignore the Soviet laws and the interests of the workers, and have lost their authority in the works collective, have no place in the management of a Soviet factory.

We see that the trade unions have rights, and real rights at that. But to realise these rights means struggling, fighting, having "teeth", standing up for the interests of the workers. But many trade union bodies have lost these qualities. Here are facts. The State annually provides enormous sums for labour protection and healthy working conditions, but unfortunately they are by no means completely used. At the fifth plenary meeting of the Central Council of Trade Unions in June 1956, data for the coal industry were quoted. Thus in 1955 2,500,000 roubles voted for these measures remained unused in the Karagandaugol Coal Combine, and 1,600,000 roubles in the Rostovugol Combine. Yet the trade union did not raise these questions with the USSR Ministry for the Coal Industry.

¹⁹ In many industries these under Soviet law must be supplied free.—Ed.

²⁰ This case was exposed at considerable length in a leading article by *Trud* on September 8, 1956. The same newspaper (the daily organ of the Central Council of Trade Unions) has in recent months reported a number of factory managers dismissed by their Ministries, on representations from the union concerned or the CCTU, for breaches of collective agreements, systematic violation of the labour laws, etc.—Ed.

In many branches of industry the housing programme is not satisfactorily carried out. In 1955, out of sixty-eight Ministries and Departments, forty-three did not complete their housing plans and thus the workers got about 2,000,000 square metres less than they were entitled to. These figures were quoted at the fifth plenum of the Central Council of Trade Unions. We would remind the reader that the unsatisfactory state of housing schemes was discussed at a meeting of the Central Council of Trade Unions more than five years ago, in January 1951, when the same Ministries were criticised. This means that the trade union organisations, including the Central Council of Trade Unions itself, have not insisted on this big and vitally important problem being tackled by the managements.

In this respect the trade union paper *Trud* deserves high praise for its sharp criticism of bureaucracy and red tape, its defence of active trade unionists, its sharp posing of important questions of trade union work. What is required of trade union organisations is not to confine themselves to registering defects, but to secure their elimination and to bring those guilty to account. A most powerful weapon which they possess is the collective agreements concluded in industrial and transport establishments, on building jobs, in machine and tractor stations and on State farms²¹. They comprise the dual obligations of the management and of the workers' collective. These agreements therefore combine both production functions and that of defence of the workers' interests, which are inherent in the Soviet trade unions. It is clear that these agreements must be one of the foundations on which all trade union work is based. Trade union organisations who put up with breaches of labour protection or of welfare obligations on the part of managements are not carrying out their supervisory function²². They should ensure that a broad mass of workers takes part in supervising the fulfilment of collective agreements—through the sub-committees of the works committees, the trade union group organisers, the voluntary factory inspectors, social insurance delegates and other active trade unionists. It is particularly useful to draw workers who are in the housing queue into supervision of the fulfilment of housing schemes.

Cultural and education work needs improving. The trade unions have a wide network of cultural and educational institutions—10,500 clubs, houses and palaces of culture, 112,000 "red corners" [shop recreation rooms], more than 10,000 cinema installations, and about 18,000 libraries. This is a great force; but it is still by no means everywhere employed as the interests of the communist upbringing of the workers require. Many clubs confine themselves to showing films and organising dances. This is to ignore the increased cultural requirements of Soviet people. The workers are showing a lively interest in political and scientific questions; they want to be acquainted with the most advanced methods of production; they strive to raise their general level of education. The duty of the trade unions is to ensure the fullest possible satisfaction of these needs. There should in particular be a wider development of methods of bringing public influence to bear on those who infringe labour discipline, the socialist way of life and the standards of Soviet morality.

The whole inner life of the trade union organisations should be built up on democratic foundations. Unfortunately much is unsatisfactory in this respect. At some factories workers' meetings are rarely called, and important questions of production and public life are not brought up at them. Some factories replace general trade union meetings, to hear reports and elect officials, by

²¹ Over 50,000 such agreements are concluded annually, between factory committees and managements respectively. To be valid, they must be endorsed by the workers' meeting. Over 2,000,000 took part in their discussion in 1955.—ED.

²² Once registered with the Central Council of Trade Unions, collective agreements become legally binding documents, for breaches of which managers bear criminal as well as civil responsibility.—ED.

delegate conferences ; this reduces the opportunity for trade union members to discuss and criticise the work of their elected bodies. It is by no means rare for plenary sessions of committees to fail to take place on the appropriate dates, or for trade union meetings to be held without a quorum. Since the twentieth Congress, the work of the leading centre of the Soviet trade unions—the Central Council²³—has become more active, and it has been working more and more as a collectively functioning body. Whereas in the past the whole burden of guidance lay on the Secretariat, the centre of gravity has now been transferred to the Presidium of the Central Council of Trade Unions, which meets regularly to discuss the most important questions. But the tempo at which this change is proceeding is still too slow. There is still a fair amount of bureaucracy and lethargy, still too much faith in the power of paper. Decisions are not always followed by live organising work and practical aid to local organisations. It has been said at recent trade union conferences and union congresses²⁴ that the secretaries and other leading members of the Central Council of Trade Unions are still seen too rarely in the factories meeting the workers.

In other trade union bodies, too, there is excessive office work. At the Saratov regional trade union conference there was justified criticism of the regional committee of the Agricultural and State Purchase Workers' Union for its addiction to paper. At twenty meetings the Presidium of this regional committee had discussed 334 questions. At some meetings the agenda included nineteen or twenty questions, and the minutes and circulars took up dozens of pages. As one of the delegates at the conference said: "You could build a dam across the Volga with all this paper." Many leading trade union workers spend days in meetings and consultations which prevent their close contact with the broad mass of workers.

An improvement in trade union work is an important political task, an integral part of all the varied activity of the party to rally the mass of the people to fulfil the majestic programme drawn up by the twentieth Congress of the CPSU.

*Editorial article, KOMMUNIST, No. 13, September 1956.
(Slightly abridged).*

²³ The Central Council of Trade Unions is elected at the Trades Union Congress, which is held once in four years. The CCTU elects a presidium (working committee). —ED.

²⁴ A congress in the USSR is the supreme authority of the organisation which holds it. It elects officials, adopts binding decisions, etc. A conference is an advisory assembly. —ED.

CRITICS' CONFUSION ABOUT THE BOLSHOI BALLET

"The Italians have *bel canto*. The Russians have *bella danza*. They sing with their bodies."—Marie Rambert.

ON June 3, 1936, Fokine wrote to me that it was his wish to clear up the confusion that then existed about Diaghilev, but he died before he realised his intention to write about the mistakes of the critics. Since then this confusion has not only become greater but it has now extended to the Bolshoi Company. Many critics believe that Soviet ballet has, like the Sleeping Beauty, been asleep, and remained unaffected by Fokine's romantic revolution and by the rest of the world's dancing and decorative art, while ballet in the west has been continuing Diaghilev's artistic activity and is therefore revolutionary. This view was also expressed by Madame Danilova in the *Sunday Times* of October 14, 1956. It could be maintained that she herself has been artistically estranged from her roots and background, and neither she nor the critics seem to realise that a great advance has been made as a result of the adaptation of Stanislavsky's system to Soviet ballet, thus integrating mime and natural acting into the dance—an ideal of Noverre's.

This development in Soviet ballet may be compared to the advent of baroque after the classicism of the Renaissance. Raphael is more clear-cut and idealised, Rembrandt and Velazquez are more dramatic and life-like. Although the Bolshoi productions seem old-fashioned to the critics, most of them recognise that the acting of Soviet ballet artists is superb in its natural simplicity, and Madame Danilova is alone in saying "it is old-fashioned with its heavy dramatic pantomime and gross gestures".

The dance in Soviet ballet does not glitter with the empty brilliance of formalism or doll-like grace, but gives a living picture of feelings and ideas. This demands a concentration of the dancer's whole attention on the creation of an artistic image rather than on overcoming technical difficulties. It has become necessary to develop technique in Soviet ballet far beyond western standards, thus liberating the spirit of the dance from its material elements. Great attention has been paid to the development of a strong and flexible back and a steel *pointe*, which enable the dancer to have a perfect balance and to execute without unsteadiness the exquisite Russian *arabesque*, which eliminates the defects of the French and Italian varieties and is distinguished by the energetically concave back gripped in the waist.

The Russians' movements are freer, their *enchaînement* is more flowing, their *port de bras* is softer, more fluid and more expressive. By comparison, the dance in western ballet is too stylised, cold and retrogressive. Its subject-matter is usually shallow and trivial, or else the dance is quite abstract, aiming only at a metro-rhythmic unity of visual and musical images.

Applying to choreography Stanislavsky's system and Belinsky's principle "in art there is no beautiful form without beautiful content", Soviet ballet masters have progressed even beyond Fokine's romantic and expressionist revolution. They compose ballets on profound subjects of literature and on themes from history and contemporary life, suffusing the dance with realism. They may not have had an opportunity of seeing famous Spanish or Indian dancers, but neither has the dance-creativity of the various peoples of the USSR been revealed to the West until quite recently, by the Beryozka and Moiseyev ensembles—only two companies, representing but a very small part of the enormous wealth and variety of Soviet folk dances, the characteristic features of which ballet masters use for their choreography as a composer inspired by a folk tune creates a symphonic poem.

From this source of inspiration emerged the stupendous Tatar dances in the

last act of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, which, in spite of inferior music, are no less stirring than Fokine's Polovtsian dances. True, the Tatar women's dances in the second act are banal, but Madame Danilova's criticism that "they show no awareness of real eastern dances, no influence of Ram Gopal" betrays a gross confusion of styles. She should know that there is nothing in common between the art and dances of the Crimean Tatars and the Indians. The Tatars do not resemble even the geographically nearer Uzbeks, whose dances were recently revealed to London by Galya Ismailova and Gulnara Mavayeva.

It is strange that when Madame Danilova appraises the male dancers of the Bolshoi Company her expert eye fails to notice the superb dancing of Fadeyeshev, Yevdokimov, Farmanyants, Kokhlov and Yagudin. It is a pity that Pushkin's words from Eugene Onegin did not occur to her: "I do not judge those people because I belong to their profession." No one would disagree with her that the "artistic standard of the Bolshoi *corps de ballet* was something of a revelation", that the movement of their arms is "fantastic", and that "each dancer is a ballerina". Hélène Bellew expresses the same opinion in the *Radio Times* of October 19, 1956: "In the *corps de ballet* and in the Bolshoi School also I saw young dancers who would be admitted immediately to any western company as leading soloists." And I think many of them would be called *assoluta*.

In the second act of *Giselle*, the slow progression of two groups in opposite directions *en arabesque*, each perfect, is incomparable and unforgettable. Their *port de bras* is almost incredible in its soft, expressive plasticity. An English critic of repute, after seeing a scene from the second act of *Swan Lake* in the Soviet film *Ballerina*, said that if he had a ballet school he would make his pupils see this part of the film every evening, so that they could watch the arm movements of the swans.

Some of us have long acquaintance with ballet, both at the Maryinsky and the Bolshoi, and know where Ulanova stands. In the words of Mr. David Webster, "a miracle". She is peerless and alone. None of the great ballerinas who have appeared in these two theatres in my time in the role of *Giselle* has equalled Ulanova. I will compare only two ballerinas—like Ulanova, *danseuses d'élévation*, although not as light as she is—Pavlova and Spessivtseva. Pavlova, in my opinion, tended to overact a little, and Spessivtseva lacked musicality but was, in Diaghilev's words, "*plus chaste*" than Pavlova.

Ulanova's *Giselle* is a simple, unsophisticated, happy peasant girl, enjoying every moment of her life. She playfully plucks the fortune-telling petals of a daisy, her every movement and *nonchalant pas ballonné* is expressive of carefree sprightliness and joy. When the moment of the tragic *dénouement* comes, the poetry of the lyrical portrait is not destroyed by melodramatic clichés, such as unpinning her hair, and her loss of spiritual balance is more expressive of deep sorrow and shock striking a mortal blow to her delicate heart than of madness. Her acting is remarkable for its sure sense of proportion. In a truly Stanislavsky manner she lives the part. This is not naturalism, it is realism of a highly artistic degree. It is not a negation of the theatre by copying a character from real life, it is an expression of what is typical in the lives and personalities of girls like Giselle, condensed into one character. In the second act she is not a cold ghost risen from the grave, but a vision of an all-forgiving love. It is not Giselle who dances, but her disembodied soul. The line of Ulanova's *arabesque* moves along her entire body. But can one describe her dancing? Perhaps only a great poet could do it justice. As to her technique, I shall content myself with quoting Dame Margot Fonteyn: "One cannot watch technique when seeing Ulanova."

Some people who have not seen Ulanova in *Giselle* have said: "How can one be better than Struchkova?" Having seen both, I feel that Struchkova

also gave a very moving performance, and revealed the perfection of her dancing. She too is a very great artist.

Samokhvalova's *pas de bourrée* deserves a special comment: it is remarkable for its amazing smoothness and almost imperceptible tiny steps when, as Myrtha, she appears for the first time from the wings. While in the west *Giselle* and *Swan Lake* are presented as fossilised museum pieces, Soviet ballet masters have been striving to find a more perfect solution of the choreographic problem of these classics, preserving only the unchanging values. The Bolshoi production of *Giselle* is undoubtedly the most beautiful in our epoch and probably in the history of ballet. A strikingly effective new feature in its choreography, spectral in quality, is the moment in the second act when Albert carries Giselle *en arabesque* with a change of aerial direction, and a "lift" when she floats like a lunar crescent above his head.

The view that the Petipa-Ivanov version of *Swan Lake* has not been followed in Moscow is not quite correct. Gorsky merely revised it, retaining the best parts and changing what had become dated, and he restored some of Chaikovsky's music that had previously been cut out. Recently Gorsky's version was revised also. Zakharov in his book *Iskusstvo balletmeistiera* (The Art of the Ballet-master), 1954, says: "At the Bolshoi all the *corps de ballet* dances of the swans are composed by Gorsky on the Ivanov principle. The choreography of the duet of Odette and Siegfried in all productions known to me is by Ivanov."

It is sad that Maya Plissetskaya, the Odette-Odile of a poet's dream, for some unrevealed reason was not allowed to conquer London. But it was a pleasant compensation to see another virtuoso of the dance—Nina Timofeyeva—in this role. At the age of twenty she has upset western standards of perfection. Her wonderful transformation from Odette, full of lyrical tenderness, into the demoniacal Odile, tempting the prince with her alluring *brio*, can be achieved only by a mature and very great artist.

The groupings of the swans form patterns of ineffable beauty. For the first time London has seen a living sculpture of Chaikovsky's lyrical and romantic essence. The dramatic impact of the fourth act, rechoreographed by Asaf Messerer, is stupendous.

It has been reported in the press that among English dancers the Bolshoi *Lac des Cygnes* has been almost universally condemned. I admire their self-confidence and courage, for I understand they are taking their own production of this Russian classic to the home of Chaikovsky.

Choreographers and scenario writers have hitherto been satisfied with the mere superficial plot of *Romeo and Juliet*, and have tried to compress the sequence of events and development of characters into a one-act ballet set to music not intended for the purpose. For the first time in the history of ballet Prokofiev and Lavrovsky have grasped the essence of Shakespeare's tragedy. Here again, Ulanova, following the Stanislavsky method, has created a choreographic portrait of Juliet not only by studying the character as it appears in Shakespeare's play, but by taking as a starting point her life experience, so that she can identify herself with Juliet. That is why she is so convincing that one forgets she is Ulanova, when she transmutes Prokofiev's music and Shakespeare's verse into sculptural reality without following the text of the play word for word. Shakespeare gives her only the idea and plan of action, and yet at times one almost hears his beautiful verse.

Struchkova in this role is also superb. Her choreographique portrait of Juliet is equally full of tenderness and lyrical charm, but she uses somewhat more vivacious colours. Her Juliet is less withdrawn and is more passionate. Her *élèvation*, if less spectre-like, is more expansive in range. The difference in their individual styles is conditioned by their different physique. *Romeo and Juliet* is a spectacle of *grand art*. The three scenes—the balcony, the duel and

the tomb—are choreographic masterpieces, and Zhdanov as Romeo and Koren as Mercutio are truly Shakespearian actors.

Those who argue that western ballet is revolutionary in comparison with that of the Bolshoi, because it continues Diaghilev's artistic activity, seem to be unaware that in the end Diaghilev was disappointed in his experiments after *le dernier cri*, which were very similar to those flourishing in Soviet Russia in the twenties. Diaghilev's experiments culminated in *Le Pas d'Acier*, with constructivist settings by the Soviet artist Yakulov. The only escape from decadence, as Diaghilev well knew, was in the reaffirmation of Belinsky's principle, quoted above. I acknowledge it would be difficult to apply this old-fashioned precept to such an advanced masterpiece as *Mademoiselle Fifi*, in which Madame Danilova appeared recently.

The Bolshoi designers have been criticised for reproducing the work of a quarter-century ago or of the Victorian epoch. The decor and costumes for *Romeo and Juliet* were inspired by Canaletto and the masters of the Renaissance; to mention just one detail, Romeo's costume, black with silver thread in a square pattern, is obviously from *A Florentine Gentleman*, by Pontormo. I cannot recollect that anyone complained that Bakst's decor for *The Sleeping Beauty*, inspired by Bibienas, or *Las Meninas*, after Velazquez, presented by Diaghilev, was retrogressive. Great art cannot become old-fashioned. It is ageless. The Bolshoi designers are not exponents of documentary decorative art, but it would be sacrilege to present a ballet based on a poem by Pushkin in surrealist or other modernistic settings. The palace of Bakhchisarai and its "fountain of tears" still stand in the old Crimean town, and their style must be respected.

The Bolshoi scenery for *Giselle* is perfect, and conveys the period atmosphere much better than Carzou's modern decor for this romantic ballet at the Paris Opera. The cage-like construction and stereotyped filigree trees at the Opera are quite irrelevant.

The Bolshoi scenery for *Swan Lake* is in complete harmony with the poetry of Chaikovsky's ballet, particularly the Lake in Acts II and IV. The decor of the ballroom in Act III deserved the spontaneous applause the moment the curtain rose, although modern artists would not or could not paint in this style.

As to the Bolshoi's "poor" costumes, it is worth quoting Miss Cranmer, the wardrobe mistress at Covent Garden: "They make their costumes out of completely different materials from ours—no nylon or rayon, but the most lovely pure silks, perfect balletic material, like the stuff eastern women use for saris."

Critics who believe they have advanced ideas about ballet and art in general should at long last realise that Soviet Russia's modernistic phase of the twenties has become the artistic creed of the West, and Soviet theatrical art has moved far from those days.

V.K.

SOVIET WORK IN THE ARCTIC

Vasili Burkanov

THE Barents, Kara, Laptev, East Siberian and Chukot Seas are in the Arctic area. They form the Northern Sea Route between the Atlantic and the Pacific, linking the western and eastern parts of the Soviet Union. More than one-third of Soviet territory lies inside the Arctic Circle and the economic and cultural development of the area is directly related to the Northern Sea Route.

This route is also of importance to those areas of our country linked to the Arctic Ocean by great rivers such as the northern Dvina, the Pechora, the Ob, the Yenisei, the Lena, the Yana, the Pyasina, the Khatanga, the Anayara, the Olenyok, the Indigirka and the Kolyma. All these rivers flow into the Arctic and form a single transport network with the Arctic seas.

These circumstances explain the special interest Russians have shown in the Arctic. Russians appeared on the White Sea coast as early as the tenth century. Russian fishermen who settled on this coast later discovered Novaya Zemlya and Grumant (Spitzbergen) and sailed regularly to and from these islands. The town of Mangazeya was founded in 1601 on the coast of Taz Bay. Siberia and the Far East began to be settled and developed in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Attempts were made by the British and the Dutch (Willem Barents, Henry Hudson and others among them) to find a north-east passage for a route to South-East Asia, China and Japan.

The next Russian effort to study and master the Northern Sea Route was made between 1725 and 1730, when the first Kamchatka expedition, led by Behring and Chirikov, explored the northern area of the Pacific. In 1728 men sailed through the straits between Asia and America (now the Behring Straits) for the second time in history.

During the eighteenth century the most important expedition was that named the Great Northern Expedition, from 1733 to 1743. It arose from an idea of Peter the Great's and was the greatest Arctic expedition of the pre-Soviet period both in scale and in results achieved. This expedition, numbering 600, with twelve large ships and auxiliary vessels, explored from the White Sea eastward to the Sea of Okhotsk. These explorers were the first to map the northern and eastern boundaries of Russia, and important discoveries, including many of the Aleutian Islands, were explored by a section of this expedition, under Behring and Chirikov.

Ice conditions on the periphery of the central Arctic basin were recorded in 1765, and this work, carried out under Chichagov, made it possible for Lomonosov to lay a basis for Arctic oceanography, make a map of the Arctic Ocean, work out the pattern of currents and ice-drifts, and classify the polar ice. The main conclusions then reached are still of importance.

Russian exploration in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries spread beyond the Arctic coastline. Hydrographical surveys and the mapping of Novaya Zemlya were carried out in 1834-5, and four voyages to Novaya Zemlya were made between 1821 and 1824 by Litke, later one of the organizers and first chairman of the Russian Geographical Society (founded 1845).

The first through voyage on the Northern Sea Route was made by a joint Swedish-Russian expedition, generously financed by the merchant Sibiryakov.

Nansen's *Fram* expedition (1893-6) was an important landmark in the study of the central Arctic regions: the ice-breaker *Yermak*, commanded by Admiral Makarov and built to his specifications, sailed the Spitzbergen area,

and oceanological research on the properties of polar ice, the conclusions of which are valid to this day, was carried out.

In the years prior to World War I, Sedov, Brusilov and V. A. Rusanov were among the explorers who continued their researches in the Arctic. One of the most important geographical discoveries of the century was made on September 2, 1913, when the expedition on the ice-breakers *Taimyr* and *Vaigach* discovered one of the largest islands of the Arctic archipelagoes, later named Severnaya Zemlya.

Planned study of the Arctic began after 1917. From 1920 cargo boats sailed from Arkhangelsk and Murmansk to the estuaries of the Ob and Yenisei. A regular service began in 1923 between Vladivostok and Kolyma, and from 1927 this service was extended from Vladivostok to Tiksi Bay and the mouth of the Lena.

A complete survey of Severnaya Zemlya was made in two years by a group led by Ushakov, and in 1932 the Otto Schmidt expedition on the ice-breaker *Sibiryakov*, captained by Vorn, was the first to navigate the entire North Sea Route in a single season.

The crew of the *Chelyuskin*, en route from Murmansk to Vladivostok, had to abandon ship in February 1934, when she became ice-bound and was crushed. The crew camped on an ice-floe, and members of the expedition were rescued by airmen sent to the scene of the accident. The *Chelyuskin* drift was of especial importance to the future of Arctic research, because it proved the possibility of carrying out scientific observation on ice-floes.

As a result of the plans formulated by Otto Schmidt and other scientists, the world's first ice-floe scientific station—known as the North Pole Station, was set up by an air expedition in 1937.

Papanin, Shirshov, Fyodorov and Krenkel drifted for nine months; the floe followed the general direction of ice-drift in the Arctic Ocean, finally being carried into the Greenland Sea.

The work of the Papanin expedition, known as *North Pole 1*, was continued by the expedition on the ice-breaker *Georgy Sedov*, which became ice-bound in the autumn of 1937 and drifted for 812 days, gathering valuable material on hydrology and meteorology.

The Papanin expedition, the *Georgy Sedov*, and Nansen's *Fram* expedition were concerned with the western Arctic. The ocean east of Novaya Sibir remained unexplored. In 1941 the Soviet Arctic Institute organised an air expedition by four-engined plane to an area some 1,000 kilometres from the nearest land, Wrangel Island and the Alaskan coast. Aircraft which could put scientists down for a few days at a time in different areas for study of particular problems were used. Ocean depths were measured and currents studied, solar radiation was observed, meteorological and magnetic tests were carried out and astronomical bearings were taken. This method became known as the "flying laboratory" method.

A detailed examination of the ice-pack in the Arctic basin was made during the Titlov flight expedition to the North Pole in 1945, an expedition important in that it showed that immense areas could be surveyed in a short period.

Three drifting "ice-islands" were observed in 1946, 1948 and 1950 by Arctic pilots, and subsequent observations made it possible to show the peculiarities of the drifting ice central Arctic basin.

Extensive planned investigation of the central Arctic began in 1948. The "flying laboratory" groups were developed into more mobile groups. Each group had several dozen specialists in oceanology, geophysics, meteorology, aerology, hydrobiology and so on, and was provided with specially prepared equipment. The group was set down in remote areas, thousands of miles from the mainland. Simultaneous work by groups located at different points resulted

in an over-all picture of meteorological and geo-physical processes as well as a good idea of the distribution and movement of the ice over vast areas, but in 1948 and 1949 the expeditions were still only able to work in the spring and summer.

To make it possible to work all the year round, a station was set down in spring 1950 by an air expedition in the least-known part of the Arctic Ocean, to the north of Wrangel Island, at 76° 02' N and 166° 30' W. This became *North Pole 2*; it was led by Somov, with a staff of sixteen, and worked for 376 days.

The 1954 attack on the central Arctic was made simultaneously in three directions. From the mainland via Franz Josef Land went an air group commissioned to investigate the Arctic Ocean between the Pole and Greenland. The expedition, which came to be known as *North Pole 3*, under Kotov, Hero of the Soviet Union, was set up after considerable initial difficulties, just under 86° 00' N and 175° 45' W. In the area north of Wrangel Island Titlov's section of this mass assault looked for a suitable floe for some time, and finally settled for a station—*North Pole 4*—to be established at 75° 48' N and 178° 25' W.

Soviet polar aviation has played a big part in making the last two drifting ice-floe stations successful and permanent in character. It has been possible to transport large quantities of goods, and in the aggregate airmen flew more than 1,000,000 kilometres over the central Arctic in the summer of 1954 and made hundreds of landings without any mishaps, although considerable problems still remain.



Until recently it was generally accepted that the central part of the Arctic Ocean was an extensive depression over 4,000 metres deep, a theory based on soundings taken during Nansen's drift on the *Fram*, by *North Pole 1* and by the *Georgy Sedov*. None of these drifts covered the greater part of the ocean between 150° E and 70° W, still blank on the map.

This impression, which has been proved untrue, was largely due to the very small number of soundings taken by all the groups mentioned. In 1948 investigations showed that the ocean bed in the central Arctic was uneven, and that only isolated individual depressions, divided off by areas of elevation, were very deep. The longest stretch had a vast underwater range extending from the Novosibirskiye Islands to Greenland and Ellesmere Island, a range now known as the Lomonosov Range.

Its existence was first established indirectly and then confirmed by the 1948 Ostrekin expedition. Members of this expedition were landed on a floe some 300 kilometres from the North Pole, in the general direction of Wrangel Island, and soundings were taken at once. A sounding taken a little later showed that the ocean was nearly 400 metres shallower. With the ice-floe moving in one direction, the depth became less with every sounding. On April 17, 1956, at 86° 26' N. and 154° 53' W, a depth of 1,290 metres was registered, nearly 1,500 metres less than on April 8, when the first soundings had been taken. After April 17, the direction of the drift changed through 180 degrees, and the ocean-depth began to increase. By comparing the results of the deep-sea observations with previous data it was found that the nature of the water in the area covered by the drift of the mobile unit was different from that in the area covered by the drifts in previous expeditions. It thus became clear that this was not an isolated elevation of the ocean bed near the Pole, but a submerged chain extending right through the Polar basin and acting as a barrier to the interchange of waters between the "Pacific" and "Atlantic" Arctic ports.

This made it possible, as early as 1948, to compile a new bathymetrical map showing the contours of the bed of the Arctic. In 1949 the map was made

more exact, and by 1954 the Cherevichny unit (with Ostrekin in charge of the scientists) felt their way along this new range, explored its "watershed" and discovered its saddles, slopes and spurs. A depth of 954 metres was found in 1954, and this is the minimum so far recorded, the maximum known depth in the central part of the ocean exceeding 5,220 metres. Over 2,000 soundings have been taken in this central area to date.

The range extends through the entire ocean, from the Novosibirskiye Islands almost to the North Pole and thence to the mainland of North America and to Ellesmere Island and Greenland.

North Pole 3 has made a most extensive survey of the section of the range in the North Pole area in three journeys. At the end of August 1954 this drifting-ice station crossed the range from west to east, drifted along it, recrossed it, this time from east to west, and crossed it again from west to east. Regular soundings made it possible to obtain a full picture of a cross-section of this range. Of particular interest is the fact that in the neighbourhood of the Pole pebbles are taken up in fairly large amounts from depths of well over 3,000 metres.

The Lomonosov Range runs parallel to the Barents-Kara mainland slope, while the rock formation running from the Chukot Sea to Greenland is parallel to the North American coastline. The crossing of the two formations has resulted in a system of depressions on the ocean bed, more or less separated by pronounced elevations or underwater reefs.

These data make it possible to make a number of assumptions about the dates of the formation of the geological structures which have produced this sea-bed in the Arctic basin. It would appear that the Lomonosov Range was thrown up during the Mesozoic or the Tertiary period, when structural breaks took place in the earth's crust. New facts are changing the prevailing views on the geological past of the vast section of the world covered by the Arctic.

Recent observations have established that warm Atlantic waters flow into the central Arctic. The great stream of Atlantic water, with a temperature above zero, is found beneath the cold top level of Arctic water throughout the central part of the ocean. At the lowest level, the water in depressions between Spitzbergen, the North Pole and the Laptev Sea proved colder than water at the same level on the side of the Lomonosov Range ; this prevents them from mixing.

Analysis of the composition of plankton, and hydrological data, indicate that the deepest waters of the central Arctic basin originate in the Atlantic but change sharply in local conditions.

In the area between meridian 160°E and 60°W (on the Canadian side) the deepest levels have a distinctive salt content and temperature and the fauna are poor, facts which show the isolation of the deep water in this area owing to the submerged range.

Plankton samples and hydrological data show that the penetration of Pacific waters through the Behring Strait is much greater than was previously thought.

Until recently it was thought that the central Arctic ice-cap was a solid mass of eternal ice. It has now been established that the ice is of different types, consisting of ice-fields and fragments of varying strength and age. Clear spaces are found in all moving ice, no matter how massive the ice-packs or what their location. As a general rule the packs increase in size in moving from south to north, though this does not always apply. The ice moving from north to south thaws more quickly than it grows ; the partial renewal of the ice is an annual process. It is therefore impossible to tell the age of such ice-floes from their thickness. There is also considerable yearly variation in the passage of icebergs to the Arctic from their place of origin (Franz Josef Land and Severnaya Zemlya).

Ice-floes of mainland origin, differing sharply in surface from the surrounding sea-ice, have been studied carefully and may be called ice-islands. Many Arctic seafarers and travellers have at times discovered what they believed to be lands in different parts of the Arctic, and later no trace of these lands could be found. Investigation has shown that these drifting ice-islands and icebergs appear in the areas where the mysterious lands were once observed.

Recent observations have justified earlier views on the presence of anti-cyclonic ice circulation in the eastern (Pacific) part of the Arctic, and have proved that there is cyclonic circulation in the western (Atlantic) part. The Lomonosov Range is the approximate boundary of these circular movements, which change according to prevailing climatic conditions. This was emphasised by the experience of *North Pole 2*. The station began its drift in April 1950, at a point $76^{\circ} 02' N$ and $166^{\circ} 30' W$. When the group was taken off the floe its position was $81^{\circ} 45' N$ and $162^{\circ} 20' W$.

In March 1952, the floe was observed under $82^{\circ} 10' N$ and $135^{\circ} 00' W$, and two years later, in April 1954, at $75^{\circ} 40' N$ and $176^{\circ} 65' W$; i.e., drifting in a circle, it had returned almost to its starting point. The trajectory of this floe was recorded over a period of four years.

The circular movements of the ice are not entirely constant or isolated from each other. It is now clear, for example, that the penetration of the heavy floes from the eastern part of the Arctic basin into the Northern Sea Route brings about the formation of impassable ice-packs, chiefly in the Aion and Taimyr areas.

Hydro-biological investigation has changed our conceptions of life in the central Arctic, particularly the view that life was poorly represented in the Arctic basin. Up to forty types of Copepoda are already known to exist there, and species of other groups of animals which had been considered to be non-existent in the Arctic have also been found.

It has been established that various parts of the ocean have local fauna of their own, though it was formerly considered that not only was there little life in the basin, but that what existed was limited to very few species.

It was once thought that there was no life on the surface of the Arctic, quite apart from the ocean depths. The drifting stations, in areas remote from the coast and even in the vicinity of the Pole, found specimens of the animal world: Polar bears, Polar foxes, seals, Arctic hares, duck, seagulls and snow buntings. A migrating flight of birds was observed at a distance of 1,500 kilometres from the coast.

There is ample and completely new evidence concerning heat exchange between the ocean and the atmosphere in the Arctic, as a result of the study of the sun's radiation, direct, diffused and reflected. This work was done simultaneously with observations of the air temperature and of the speed of the wind at various heights within the limits of the air stratum closest to the earth.

It used to be considered that the annual radiation balance in the central Arctic was negative. The radiation balance is the difference between the impact of the sun's radiation on the earth and its return into the atmosphere. During the drift of *North Pole 2* it was established that the annual effect of the sun's heat on the ice exceeds its expenditure, owing to diffusion, dispersion and reflection; i.e. the annual radiation balance is positive and equals 2.9 cal/sq. cms.

In analysing the results of magnetic observations taken during the drift of *North Pole 1* and of the *Georgy Sedov*, it became clear that, in the north-east of the Novosibirskiye Islands, the angle of vertical inclination of a freely

suspended magnetic needle tended to increase sharply, and the magnetic meridians tended to converge at a point located roughly at 86° N and 180° E. It had long been assumed that there was a second magnetic pole, although there were insufficient data to confirm this supposition.

In the area of the supposed second pole the inclination towards the horizon is not 90° but only about 88° 5'. But along the vast distance from the Taimyr Peninsula via the North Pole area to the Canadian Arctic archipelago (to the magnetic pole) there is a narrow strip of magnetic anomaly in which the magnetic meridians draw together to form a long cluster of almost parallel lines. Further research is required, but it is clear that the magnetic anomaly in the Arctic originates to some degree in the magnetic content of the rock formation of the Lomonosov Range. Changes in the magnetic field have also been noted in places where there is a pronounced change in the depth of the ocean.

Cartographic work was done on a large scale by aerial photography from 1947-53 and previous maps of the Soviet Arctic have been radically redrawn. In some cases corrections had to be made even on small-scale maps. Many geographical points on the old maps were shown dozens of kilometres from their true positions, and in some places mistakes of hundreds of metres were made in heights. This was particularly true of the north-eastern part of the Taimyr Peninsula, Laik Taimyr and Lake Portnyagin.

The scale of the work done is best indicated by the fact that sixty per cent of the Taimyr Peninsula territory was blank on old maps. Franz Josef Land is now drawn quite differently, and Severnaya Zemlya, the Novosibirskiye Islands, the Sergei Kirov Islands and others are differently charted. Vize Island proved twice as large as shown on old maps.

North Pole 3 began its drift on April 9, 1954, at 86° 00' N and 175° 45' W, and in four and a half months moved into the direct vicinity of the Pole; the capricious autumn weather held it in the same area for a long time. In six months it covered an over-all winding course of nearly 1,300 km, and in a general north-easterly direction of some 500 km. Two months later the station was located at 88° 21' N and 56° 15' W. It was then drawn into the rapid drift southward towards Greenland, where its movement slackened considerably. It ceased work on April 20, 1955, when it was at 85° 59' N and 31° 40' W.

It travelled nearly 2,200 km. in all but only about 820 km as the crow flies. It was closed down because it was feared that the floe might be carried through the straits between Greenland and Spitzbergen into the Greenland Sea. Its speed was about 6 km per day, but reached 30 km on some days.

North Pole 4 began its drift on April 8, 1954, at 75° 48' N and 178° 25' W. The first part of the drift was spent in the area of the mainland slope. In October the depth of the ocean changed sharply. At the beginning of April 1955 *North Pole 4* was at 80° 26' N and 173° 20' E; i.e. it had covered almost 2,500 km in a year and over 520 km as the crow flies. The average daily speed of drift was nearly 7 km, but sometimes reached 23 km.

The staff on the floes endured severe hardships. *North Pole 3* suffered severe compression from December 1954 onwards. The camp was repeatedly broken by wide cracks, and, despite the Polar night and a temperature of minus 46°C, they had to strike camp and move to a new site no less than four times.

North Pole 4 had its worst period in the summer of 1954, when the ice near the station began to break away and the clear sea round the floe was so large an area that waves began to buffet the floe.

It is mistaken to think that difficulties in the Arctic are a thing of the past.

The techniques by which man can conquer nature have improved beyond recognition, but the Arctic has not changed.

North Pole 3 discovered that the waters of the Arctic are richly populated with sporogenous and non-sporogenous bacteria ; cocci and yeasts were found on the ocean bed at 3,400 metres during micro-biological examination near the Pole.

To take the place of *North Pole 3*, because of its drift to the edge of the Arctic basin, it was decided to set up a new drifting station, *North Pole 5*. This was done between April 16 and 24, 1955, at 82° 11' N and 156° 13' E.

Many secrets of Nature in the Polar regions have been discovered, and a number of conclusions of great practical importance have been drawn. Much, however, remains unknown and mysterious, and Polar research workers have a long way to go to wrest all the Arctic's secrets from it and understand its nature.

Abridged and adapted from *New Soviet Discoveries in the Arctic*,
by Vasili Burkhanov. Moscow, 1956.

The author led the Soviet high-altitude expeditions of 1954 and 1955.



SOVIET GRAIN CROP, 1955

IN an article on the prospects for British-Soviet trade under the sixth five-year plan (*ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL*, Vol. XVII, No. 1) an estimate of the Soviet net grain crop, delivered to barns in 1955, made by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, was given (129 million tons)—with a larger figure for the gross crop before losses in harvesting (157 million tons). We are now able to give the position a little more precisely.

Reliable but unofficial figures, received by the good offices of our Moscow correspondent Mr. Ralph Parker, now confirm that the 1955 barn crop of grain was between 127 and 130 million tons. Applying the method of calculation used by the ECE for harvest losses—one-sixth in a good year—this in turn would put the gross crop last year at between 152 and 156 million tons.

The essential point—that there is a very large margin available for British-Soviet trade, given the removal of hampering discrimination against the USSR as regards British exports—remains of course unaffected.

SCR TRIP TO LENINGRAD, August 1956

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

IN 1925, after a short visit to Leningrad, Maynard Keynes wrote :

There never was anyone so *serious* as the Russian of the Revolution, serious even in his gaiety and abandon of spirit—so serious that sometimes he can forget tomorrow and sometimes he can forget today. . . . Here—one feels at moments—in spite of poverty, stupidity and oppression, is the Laboratory of Life. Here the chemicals are being mixed in new combinations, and stink and explode. Something—there is just a chance—might come out. And even a chance gives to what is happening in Russia more importance than what is happening (let us say) in the United States of America.

That was thirty years ago. Since then we have heard much about the oppression ; as to poverty, it is all too apparent to the tourist who has disembarked for a few hours on his way to Leningrad at the prosperous Baltic ports of Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki, with their elegant shop-windows, congested shining traffic and well-dressed citizens. But the charge of stupidity can scarcely be levelled any longer against a system of government which has steered an illiterate and famine-stricken populace clear of bitter fascist and capitalist hot and cold wars, on to a plane from which they can boldly face the terrifying armament of those who desire to negotiate with them “from strength”.

It is becoming apparent that the foundations being laid in 1925 with so much seriousness were sound moral foundations. If the society built upon them is still poor it is not discontented, but full of hope, consciously directing its combined energy to improving the quality of life of its members. If clothing and footwear are in short supply and of inferior quality, moderate rents include heating, and books are plentiful ; if there are few private motor cars, the Underground-Metro has fairy-tale beauty and grandeur, and is quick and cheap. If foreign travel is restricted, there is ample provision for recreation and amusement, and from Saturday afternoon till Sunday night crowds of happy young people play football and tennis, row, parachute jump, pore over chess-boards, listen to good music, and with more decorum and discrimination—so it seemed to me—than they do here.

Not only is tipping abolished, and commercial advertisement, but I noticed no prostitution, for *bon camaraderie* is not just a phrase but the paramount human relationship. A little incident as our good ship the *Viacheslav Molotov* pushed away from the quay at Leningrad was typical : a man came running with a big bunch of flowers for one of the passengers, just too late, the gangway had been pulled up and we were adrift ; he rushed up to an officer standing on the quay ; quick as thought an order was shouted to a sailor on board, a rope was thrown, the flowers were tied to the middle of it, and the officer held one end of the rope while the sailor on board ship carefully pulled the bunch over and handed it to a happy recipient. Officialdom had yielded to human kindness.

Gorki said of Chekhov :

I have never known a man feel the importance of work as the foundation of all culture so deeply, and for such varied reasons, as did Chekhov. This feeling expressed itself in all the trifles of his life : in his habits, in his choice of things, and in that noble love for man's works which, knowing no desire of collecting them, never tires of admiring them as the product of man's creative spirit. He felt the poetry of labour.

Perhaps it is an exaggeration to say that every Russian feels the poetry of labour, but the moral force propelling this social order is the *dignity* of labour and of nothing else. The stinks and explosions are over, I believe, and the foundations of socialism in the USSR firmly laid.

NAOMI BIRNBERG.

CLOTHES

On my first visit to the USSR and to Leningrad I was, like many other tourists, keen to observe the people's habits and their dress.

Since 1917 and the revolution, much has been written of the restrictions in style and output of clothes, mainly due to considered policies and planning economy. I understood that the ordinary folk of the USSR had a great problem in attempting to keep up anything resembling the style of dress common in the West. It was natural to assume that the older folk kept to the style of dress usual in the days before 1917, while the younger ones, suffering from the effects of the 1939-45 war, tended to accept what was available.

A number of factors enter into the problem of dressing the people, the very vital ones being the supply of raw materials such as wool, cotton, silk and synthetic fibres like nylon. Even when the cloth had been produced, factories had to be set up to tackle the production of clothes for a country so large, with all conceivable climatic, geographical and industrial conditions.

Before I left London, I came into actual contact with Soviet citizens, for I joined a Russian ship, the *Vyacheslav Molotov*, a vessel of 7,497 tons with a crew of 149. The officers, sailors, stewards and stewardesses were comparable in every way with what one would see or expect on a British ship of similar size and scope. I thought that on a vessel trading to the United Kingdom many of the furnishings might have been bought in London, but that notion was quickly dispelled. The bedding, towels, etc., supplied were of first-class quality.

On arriving at Leningrad, I had a grand-stand view from the ship of the Soviet delegation waiting to greet the Norwegian parliamentary delegation, who were passengers on the ship and were paying an official visit. The Soviet delegates were of both sexes and one got a rare chance to see and sum up the clothes. Certainly they appeared to be well clad in a quiet way, bright colours being non-existent. Of course, one may suppose that they had dressed for the occasion and were all persons of some standing. The ladies' style appeared to favour a good type of Raglan coat in grey material, various styles or types of shoe, and a hat (if any) usually small and tight-fitting ; handbags were very scarce. The men favoured dark suits, grey overcoats and black boots or shoes ; if a hat, it was a trilby.

Very soon we passed through the customs and immigration officers, and duly arrived at our hotel for lunch. I was struck with the waitresses' clean and neat appearance. Each wore a cream blouse and blue serge skirt seemingly supplied by the hotel ; the shoes and stockings appeared to be their own, but all were good for such duties. It was when you got out into the streets, shops and parks of Leningrad that you saw the differences in the styles and qualities of the dress worn by the passers-by. You could sense those who were up from the country and pick out the typical city-dweller in many ways by the clothes.

The shops ? I am afraid that those I saw did not appear to have the necessary variety of style, or even the stocks, to enable them to make an effective display. Many articles were even badly pressed. Clothing is dear, even allowing for inconsistencies in the value of the rouble. To compare figures of goods or prices is not easy, but if I accept that to a worker in the USSR a rouble is 6d., then they must pay 50 to 100 per cent more for an article than we do. As their wages are not as high as in Great Britain, in purchasing clothing the main consideration is twofold, availability and price.

My first impression of the people in the Nevsky Prospect, Leningrad's main street, was that many of the menfolk wore uniform, Army, Navy, Air Force, etc. : each uniform looked good and well fitting. If the uniformed man was escorting a lady, a noticeable fact was that the lady usually dressed according to the man's rank.

Starting from the youngest, the elaborate way very small or new-born babies are muffled up is no doubt governed by the long cold periods so far north. The babies were practically covered by a wool blanket from head to feet, leaving only a very small space to let air in. For the younger children, boys and girls of, say, four to seven years of age, utility was the main factor, clothes, shoes and stockings being of a strong type, made for bad weather and hard wear. From the seven or eight group upwards to the fourteen or fifteen group, one saw a variation and more of the typically school boy or girl attitude to dress : for the girls the full dress or blouse-and-skirt idea, for the boys a suit or windcheater jacket and trousers, both with rather coarse stockings and shoes.

The next group, teenagers or those in their early twenties, interested me most. The young ladies were very poor indeed in their choice of styles, preferring a skirt of dark grey or navy material coupled with a coat in a different colour, perhaps an odd coat from a costume long since out of date ; shoes and stockings fairly rough ; usually no hat or handbag. The young chap in his teens wore no tie, whatever type of suit or shirt he wore, and only rarely a hat or cap.

In discussing the teenagers' dress with a young lady student, I was very surprised to learn that it was their own choice, and not expense, that was paramount. Style and quality improved as the years went on ; a middle-aged couple appeared to be prosperous, always buying the best available.

The oldest group, aged fifty and upwards, were the poor of Leningrad : style, quality and modernity were lacking in nearly every case, many of the old ladies keeping to their shawls and the old men to the top boots of tsarist days.

But what of Sunday ? A walk along the main street or in the park gave one a very agreeable surprise. All except the over-fifty group had on their "Sunday best". Everyone dressed up and tried to wear the clothes as good best clothes should be worn. Gone were the odd garments the young people wore during the week. The young ladies were wearing coloured dresses, costumes or well-fitting coats. Whether the young lady was with a man in uniform or with a civilian, you could sense that the day meant everything to herself and her future, so she dressed to please. No doubt the loss of manpower during 1939-45 explains the ladies' attitude.

I am certain that the people of the USSR, and Leningrad in particular, are certainly and surely conscious that a good appearance needs good clothes ; the coming generations will demand them, and the country will supply them.

P. COUCHMAN.

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS LATER

My first visit to the USSR was paid in 1932 ; my last was this year (1956).

In 1932 friends of the USSR spoke of the Soviet "experiment" ; enemies confidently announced its doom. Since then the USSR has been through a major war and suffered devastation that would have done for any other country. Its citizens have come through it all ; and the chief impression one gets is of stability and confidence. Talk of the Soviet "experiment" is out of date ; the socialist State is in being and is going ahead.

Undoubtedly the standard of living is in many respects below ours, but this can and will be raised by improving technique. There are not, as in the West, vested interests to be fought every step of the way. And what a relief to travel on a Metro where advertisements do not shriek at every station and on every escalator that "Somebody isn't using . . . !"

To quote Lincoln Steffens's words in 1919 : "I have seen the future, and it works." I hope to see it again, working still better.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON.

TRAVEL DIARY

We sail out of Helsinki across the Gulf of Finland with sun to port and rain to starboard, in and out among the Thousand Islands. There are broken rainbows glimmering everywhere, moony gleams of brightness tremble through the wet mists, and the leaden raindrops peck hungrily at the glass-green water.

On Thursday morning we approach Leningrad. Very like nearing London. I seem to recognise Tilbury, Gravesend, Dagenham. Grey, windyish weather, hundreds of cranes, a lot of timber. Freight railways. Factories. A lot of notices saying "Do not cast anchor." The quayside is so like London that I almost imagine we have stealthily sailed back again.

A Norwegian parliamentary delegation disembarks first and is welcomed officially. Then the struggle to the gangway. Show your passports and currency forms. No examination of luggage. Customs house large, clean and substantial. *Bureau de change* open and cashing travellers' cheques. A French-type bus takes us to the hotel. Street after street seem just like suburban Paris ; tall grey houses with balconies and shutters, high-pitched roofs and odd glimpses of interior courtyards, elderly *concierges* sitting at the entrances. Ice-cream and soft-drink stalls everywhere ; not many shops, most of them food stores. Quite a few places called "*remont*"—repairs and cleaning.

The hotel is the Europa, whose modest entrance in one of the streets leading off the Nevsky Prospect conceals an establishment about the size of Blenheim Palace. The lift shaft is in the dead centre of the building, and from it a world-record corridor stretches left and right. (As Mrs. Kelly of Glencree used to say, "When your eyes light on the long dark road that does be going over the bog, it puts the heart down in you.") The corridor is austere, polished, carpeted, with large white china ashtrays every few yards. A corridor window is open, and in a courtyard below I see two buxom, cheerful women lightly shovelling cinders on to a lorry.

The "room" for two proves to be an apartment, containing hallway, bathroom, passage, sitting-room and sleeping alcove with single bed behind floor-to-ceiling blue velvet curtains. Double windows, with a grand view of the gilt-onion-domed Church of the Redemption. Sofa, large writing-desk, round table, four chairs, wardrobe, bedside table, telephone, waste-paper basket. Have to shift desk in order to get table light on and window open at same time. Sleep on sofa.

The dining-room—approached, if on foot, by a curving staircase coming up beside the orchestra, as if one was expected to enter singing—is on the fifth floor. Odd. Down on the first floor, or *belle étage*, there is an opulent red velvet foyer, pure 1880. At every corner there are large china ashtrays (throwing down a matchstick or a cigarette end is simply unthinkable). The food is lavish, though too heavy for my taste.

Fascinating to be told very firmly : "The lift does *not* go down!" (Newton be blowed.) The room keys are of monumental "freedom of the city" design. The wardrobes are made for giants and the sofas for dwarfs.



The major impression is *space*. The whole town is broad and spacious. The streets are very long and straight and wide ; the main arm of the Neva, immensely wide, fetches around in a tremendous great curve ; the palace

façades stretch off almost out of sight in each direction. Palace Square is so vast that it seems to take fully five minutes to walk across it ; the Nevsky Prospect goes running on and on, arrow-straight, till you feel it must reach all the way to Moscow. There must be more room to breathe in Leningrad than in any other big city in the world.

Yet there is no sense of intimidating size ; the buildings are not particularly high, and nothing seems heavy or lumpish. It is the policy of the City Council to retain and preserve the city's historic atmosphere, and not to permit skyscrapers or modernist edifices near the centre.

Peter the Great is still ever-present. Right in the middle of the town, enclosed in a brick outer shell to preserve it, is Peter's tiny wooden house, the very first building ever set up in this northern marshland. "*Here shall be my city*", said Peter, standing on a hummock of an island in the desolate fen. From that tiny simple house he himself directed all the massive work of draining, laying foundations, street-planning, building and decorating. Master of more than ninety crafts, he could teach the masons, carpenters, goldsmiths and the rest their trades, and he did. The heart leaps to the all-conquering imagination and ability of the man who could both conceive and carry out such a project.

Peter's baroque palaces are painted acid green, mustard yellow, cobalt blue, apricot pink. In the thin clear light of the north the strong colours are romantic. The flaking outsides of the museums and historic buildings need maintenance. They all display notices asking for painters, carpenters, plasterers. There is a shortage of labour and jobs are going begging. But once inside you would think the places had been built and decorated yesterday.



One morning three of us stop at a bookstall to buy an atlas. Citizens cluster round to help the foreigners. Two of them inquire anxiously whether we have seen Pushkin's house, and lead us there, along a canal straight out of Gogol.

It is a real jewel, the finest small museum I have ever seen anywhere. This is the house where the poet lived in the last six months of his life, and except for framed manuscripts and first editions on the walls, and some pictures, everything is as he left it—his writing desk, dining table, library. It is a real writer's house, simple and functional and in beautiful taste. All the furnishings are Russian-made, except the two clocks—both of which are from London. There is the glove that was on his left hand when the body was brought back after the duel, and there is the travelling chest of his grandfather Hannibal, Peter the Great's negro slave. In the library there is an English-Russian dictionary dated 1808. Simple and fine, the whole house still, after 120 years, breathes the spirit of its last and greatest tenant.



Shopping ? The Leningrad shops at first seem fantastic. The windows along the Nevsky Prospect are like fair-sized domestic windows, some four or five feet wide and eight or nine feet high, with their tops rounded off into arches like fanlights. The same pattern is repeated all along the street. Most of the windows are set high, the sills about four feet above ground level. There are no views through into the shops, for the window-fronts are enclosed boxes only a couple of feet deep. Almost every shop is entered either up or down half a dozen steps. About half of them are sunk somewhat below the pavement : in only very few do you enter at ground level. There are pavement-level half-windows for the lower shops.

All this lends an extraordinarily furtive and secretive air to the business of buying and selling. Craning your neck to gaze upwards at natty plastic radio sets, or flexing your knees to peer downwards at soaps and perfumes, you

wonder how in the world these doll's-house windows can be expected to hold a representative display of anything at all. But you succumb to the pervasive charm of the atmosphere. Peculiar, fantastic, Addisonian or what you will, Leningrad has *charm*.

As for the goods on sale, you get plenty of shocks. Money comparisons with Britain are pretty futile, but on any basis, to English eyes, prices are all over the place. Books, cast-iron saucepans, refrigerators, transport, sheet-music and records (if classical), stationery, washing-machines and entertainment charges : cheap. Food, radio and television sets, aluminium saucepans and furniture : quite reasonable. Sweets, toys, postage, leather goods and, above all, clothes : dear or very dear. Nylon and the newer type of plastics virtually non-existent.

A spiv-type tie (red, silver and black stripes) costs 50 per cent *more* than an electric bowl fire (the latter was quite cheap). Classical and folk music is tax-free, so that jazz records cost much more than sonatas and symphonies. A small clockwork seal costs me 10 per cent more than the spiv tie would have done. I spend more on an air-mail letter to London than on a copy of the very latest detailed map of the USSR, about four feet square. (*And* the letter did not arrive till after I got back !) You can buy a couple of electric fires for the price of a pound of chocolate.

In a huge co-op stores in the Kirov Metal Works district I buy a chocolate éclair. It costs me twice as much as the map. But, oh boy, *what* an éclair ! It is about eight inches long, two inches wide and an inch and a half deep, made of excellent *choux* pastry, and crammed tight from end to end with real fresh whipped cream . . .

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In a restaurant on the Nevsky—where, as I later learned by chance, Pushkin once used to dine—anything on the menu, from soup to a three-course dinner, may be bought at the counter to take home at a 10 per cent reduction on the menu prices, which themselves are quite low. The menu gives the names of the various cooks. “Comrade Cook Ivanov is responsible for the following dishes . . .” It is up to the customers, if they feel like it, to write in to *Leningradskaya Pravda* or to the City Council, and say that Comrade Cook Ivanov’s *boeuf Stroganov* is just like mother made, or that Comrade Cook Ivanov had better try bricklaying. In all the restaurants, dark rye bread is served free in unlimited quantity ; there is a small charge for white bread. The soups—usually including a slice of beef or a leg of chicken—and the fish and meat dishes are substantial and tasty ; but, apart from potatoes, no vegetables except as part of the soup or in the pasties. The only “afters” are ice-cream, fruit-salad or cakes and biscuits. The ice-cream, which the citizens consume tirelessly from dawn till midnight, is superb, but the fruit salad is unexciting and horribly monotonous.

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The sixty-four-dollar question that every Leningrader anxiously puts to you at once is “How about the Metro ?” The eight-station underground line, opened in November 1955, is very deep below ground, down in the bedrock right under the marsh. The escalators make London’s longest and deepest look like toys. Their pitch is frighteningly steep : standing at the top you literally cannot see the bottom. It takes two and a half minutes from end to end.

The stations are very spacious and lavish, yet not over-decorated. The materials—marble, basalt, crystal, glass, copper, silver, gold—are rich and solid, but the treatment is dignified, sober and tasteful.

STELLA JACKSON.

Book Reviews

AN EXCELLENT LITERARY HISTORY

The Russian Novel in English Fiction. Gilbert Phelps. (Hutchinson's University Library, 10/6.)

NOWADAYS it is rare indeed to find a serious work of literary criticism which tackles its subjects both broadly and deeply, takes account of history, and presents as it were a chart of cross-current here and undertow there, without leaving the reader confused and stupefied.

Mr. Phelps is to be most warmly congratulated on his brilliant examination, analysis and assessment of the precise debt owned by nineteenth- and twentieth-century English literature to Pushkin, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Gorky and Chekhov.

Particularly commendable are his careful and detailed distinction between the crazes or cults and the genuine influences, his lucid exposition of the impact of English writing upon Russian and the reaction of the great Russians upon the English (partly in revulsion against the excesses of French naturalism on the one hand and the sterility of symbolism and æstheticism on the other), and his exact perception of the relevance of historical events in the wider sphere.

Only quotations can exemplify the book's quality.

On translation: "... various contortions and oddities of expression had contributed to the Russian atmosphere vibrations and mystifications that were quite extraneous . . . the distorting mirror in which the earlier translators reflected it, therefore, accounts in large part for the blurred outlines of the Russian influence."

On crazes and cults: "In the whole history of the Russian novel in England . . . it is difficult to point to a single lucid interval in which the normal processes of cultural assimilation and assessment could take place. . . . The concentration on the Dostoyevsky cult . . . has led in fact to a further distortion of the true picture. The first step . . . must be to shift the emphasis away from D. and to place it instead on Turgenev."

On Turgenev: ". . . much of the early interest in T. was concerned with politics. . . . The novel through which T. became known to a wider public was *Virgin Soil*, which achieved its popularity mainly because of the publicity value of its theme. . . . *A Sportsman's Sketches*, for the English, remained his most characteristic work . . . they believed that the book was

directly instrumental in securing the liberation of the serfs . . . it corresponded to the liberal and humanitarian feeling of the day. . . . T.'s attitude towards nature was thoroughly in accord with English tastes . . . warmer, more intimate, more humanised and domestic than most of the Russians."

On Tolstoy: ". . . if there was one element which more than any other explained the awe which T. inspired, it was his uncanny power of putting his finger exactly on those spots where the conscience of the West was most tender. . . . Many were in general sympathy with . . . T.'s insistence that the Art that is accessible only to a privileged class is false, and with his belief in the innate ability of all men to respond to that true Art which, by uniting them in a community of feeling, helps to further the brotherhood of man. . . . T.'s teachings entered into currents of English thought that were already powerful, and from which he himself derived nourishment."

On Dostoyevsky: ". . . [in the 1880s] his preoccupation with the morbid and the abnormal aroused some exasperation and a good deal of bewilderment . . . it was almost universally agreed that he could not write a novel that even remotely approached a work of art. . . . Up to 1912 the consciousness of disintegration was not sufficiently strong to establish the real significance of D.'s example. . . . The later stages of the Idealist reaction against the Rationalist and Utilitarian philosophies . . . were marked by an increasing insistence on the superiority of the intuition and the imagination over the intellect, a revival of interest in mysticism and the supernatural. . . . Constance Garnett's translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* touched off the D. cult and the Russian fever. Excellent though her work was . . . it was not sufficient in itself to explain the extraordinary suddenness of the flare-up. . . . Various forces and tendencies, social, economic, philosophical and æsthetic . . . gradually accumulating throughout the nineteenth century, had suddenly increased their pressure . . . the D. cult symbolised a powerful liberation of emotions that had been held in check by nineteenth-century Rationalism and by over-rigid æsthetic theories . . . [it] can also be seen as the last flare-up of the Romantic decadence, in response to a sudden acceleration of the self-destructive, disintegrating forces within contemporary society. . . . The most extravagant symptoms of the D. craze belong to the war years. . . . He was 'beatiified, canonised, sainted' . . . A review of 1916

declared that if the gospel of St. John were suddenly blotted out from human ken, the work of D. would replace it. . . . It was not perhaps surprising that the Russian influence which had begun as an invigorating alternative to French naturalism appeared, as it came to a head in the D. cult, to be degenerating into hysteria and mystical jargon."

On Gorky: "Whereas in Dostoyevsky pity is elevated into a religious principle, an end in itself, in G. it is a spur to anger, or to action. . . . D. seemed to G. not only to represent the passive 'Asiatic principle' in Russian life, but also to stand for a rejection of life itself . . . G. proclaimed the value and beauty of work, work of any kind provided it was an act of creation and pleasure. . . . Of all the Russians perhaps he has been the least understood and the least appreciated. The D. cult was in fact too strong. . . . G.'s own misfits . . . are symbols of a restless energy which has yet found no satisfactory outlet."

On Chekhov: "The Chekhov craze was in many ways a continuation of the D. cult . . . in a minor key. . . . The C. mystique, though as productive as that of D. in esoteric jargon and downright silliness, was more in tune with . . . the spiritual lassitude of the post-war era. In actual fact C. was neither resigned nor pessimistic . . . the majority of the English intelligentsia . . . handed themselves over to a cult which they had created more in their own likeness than in that of C."

The book is clear, straightforward, cogent, eminently readable and wholly satisfactory. It is of equal importance to English, French and Russian students of all three literatures, and should without fail be translated as soon as possible.

S.J.

THE ARCTIC

The Northern Sea Route. Constantine Krypton. (Methuen, pp. ix+219. 21/-.)

PREPARED with the help of "East European Fund, Inc." in New York, and printed in the United States of America, this work by a former Soviet citizen represents a considerable amount of careful research. The writer has made a meticulous study of every kind of geographical, economic and political material, as well as of official reports of every kind (including notes he took with him when he left the Soviet Union) on the great Arctic waterway along the northern seaboard of the USSR, and to a lesser extent on the economy of the Soviet north. He does not trouble to conceal his prejudices, but the material frequently gets the better of him. Thus, despite much sarcasm about the "myth" and "fiction" of the economic advantages of the route, he somewhat unexpectedly admits that, whereas before its development began (1920-1928) its average

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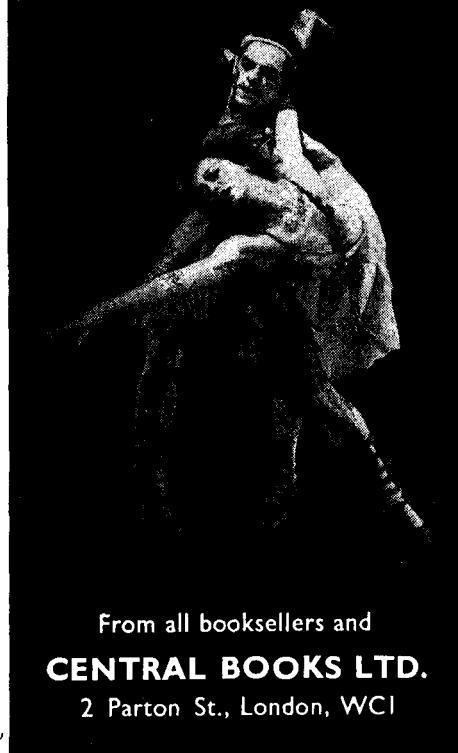
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annual freight turnover was 12,300 tons, the figure climbed to 110,000 tons during the first five-year plan, 179,000 tons in the second, 230,000 in the third, and in 1945 was about 355,000 tons. The author's only consolation is that he does not know whether it has yet reached the 850,000 tons which Stalin once said was necessary to make it pay.

Mr. Krypton passes hastily over the question of the advance of the northern peoples of the USSR, saying that it has been "slow" (p. 172) and that up to 1940 Soviet efforts in this sphere had had "only minor results". It is curious that, in a work which quotes Soviet publications of 1955, there should be no mention of D. P. Kruchinin's article in No. 2 of *Voprosy Istorii* for 1953, *Economic and Cultural Development of the Soviet Northern Peoples* (summarised in this journal, Vol. XIV, No. 2), which gave numerous facts justifying a different impression.

A.R.

USEFUL PERIODICAL

Oxford Slavonic Papers, Vol. VI, 1955. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. London: Cumberlege; pp. 143. 18/- net.)

ALTHOUGH not strictly germane to the interests of the ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL, the article by Professor St. Kot on the Latin and Polish doggerel of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century humorists in Poland, describing the popular characteristics of various nations, merits attention both for its scholarship and for the unusual boldness of some of its amusing quotations—even though veiled in the decent obscurity of a learned language. A lecture on Russian river names, by a German professor, also provides lighter relief. Professor Konovalov, the editor, publishes another of his valuable commented reprints of foreigners' accounts of Russia in her later Middle Ages—this time the story of Stenka Razin's peasant revolt (1667-71), by a Dutchman in the Russian service, Ludvig Fabritius. There is an interesting full-length account of Georgian studies at Oxford, by Mr. David M. Lang; and a paper on Lord Salisbury's dealings with Russia in 1898.

A.R.

MOSCOW BALLET

Ballet in Moscow Today. Hélène Bellew. (Thames and Hudson, 35/-.)

MADAME BELLEW, of whose fine work as a dancer we have such pleasant memories, has written a valuable book, which is well documented, as she had the advantage of seeing practically the entire repertoire of the Bolshoi Theatre.

It is richly illustrated with well-selected

photographs, and its text is divided into two parts. The first, after a general introduction, consists of short notes of appraisal of each individual dancer, and is rather catalogue-like. The second part is devoted to a description of various ballets, mainly scenarios. There is no concrete evaluation of the choreographic process and the execution of various roles by different artists, nor is there an analysis of the various elements which form the dance.

A comparison in general terms is made between Soviet and western ballet, and a just tribute is paid to the far superior technique and artistic abilities of Soviet dancers, but the author commits the common error of thinking that Soviet ballet has, like the Sleeping Beauty, been asleep while its western counterpart has been progressing. She does not seem to realise that in fact *western ballet* has been in artistic isolation from the advanced creative process in Soviet choreography initiated by Stanislavsky: but on this subject please refer to *Critics' Confusion about Bolshoi Ballet*, on p. 23.

V.K.

TOURING THE USSR

Excursion to Russia. Joyce Egginton. (Hutchinson, 12/6.)

Ivan the Not So Terrible. Archie Johnstone. (BSFS, 7/6.)

Russian Holiday. Allan Chappelow. (Harrap, 15/-.)

HERE are three books giving an inside view of the Soviet Union, two of them by summer visitors and the other by a resident of Moscow. Miss Egginton and Mr. Chappelow were members of a student group which toured the USSR in 1955; Mr. Johnstone is a journalist and translator who lives there.

Naturally, Miss Egginton and Mr. Chappelow went to the same places and saw the same things, and the framework of their two accounts is the same. Miss Egginton, however, is much more discursive, more chatty, more speculative, fonder of wondering why and how and whether. Mr. Chappelow is meatier and more generally informative. He gives a list of prices of all sorts of goods, an outline catalogue of part of the Hermitage collection, a good many historical dates, and so on. Miss Egginton goes into much more detail over such things as the rare and curious Fabergé eggs on show in the Kremlin, and her crack "No orchids for Miss Russia" is two-edged.

On the whole Mr. Chappelow's book is the solider and more satisfying, but both are readable, fresh and friendly. Both are illustrated, *Excursion to Russia* with twenty-five photographs, and *Russian Holiday* with a lavish 112, plus a colour frontispiece.

Mr. Johnstone's aim is to convey what it

is like to live among Russians day in and day out. His book is written in a light comedy vein, unfortunately tending at times towards archness. The general effect is a trifle too slick and journalistic; it is the kind of book that is agreeable in small doses, but if taken straight through may irritate some.

It contains an interesting section on the discrepancy between the equality of women in the public sphere and their still unfair share of domestic burdens. This affects young people too: "The boys have better school marks than the girls, but I feel the difference would be much less if the girls had the same amount of free time for home study and play. . . . The grandmother is to blame. . . . To her . . . the short-panted males are the little Lords of Creation."

Mr. Johnstone's views on literary merit are highly personal. The notion, for instance, that Dreiser "makes a completely valid comparison" with Jack London is preposterous. It is like claiming complete validity for a comparison between an elephant and an Alsatian. Still and all, this is a book to be read.

S.J.

MUSICAL CURTAIN

A History of Russian Music. Richard Anthony Leonard. (Jarrolds, 30/-.)

As a history of Russian music this book is sharply divided by what I am bound to call political prejudice. On page 283 its author says that "no one outside the Iron Curtain can know for certain what goes on

inside". On page 285 he asserts quite dogmatically that to the mind of the Bolshevik leader government was "an instrument of suppression".

At that point, for Mr. Leonard, the curtain descended.

The first assertion is made in the course of wondering what influence the music of Stravinsky, "one of the chief adornments of Russian music", has had or can have on Russian musicians.

The second occurs at the outset of his chapter on Soviet music. As the Iron Curtain intervenes between him and first-hand knowledge, he falls back, mostly without criticism, on accounts given by Gerald Abraham, Boelza, Rena Moisenko, Werth and the deeply biased Nabokov.

Up to the division, his thesis is the brilliant eclecticism displayed by composers from Glinka to Stravinsky. On the one side the ancient church modes; on the other the vivid and potent folk music which that church ruthlessly suppressed: the two fused by the available cosmopolitan characteristics, and absorbed to the height of genius.

He considers the folk-element the chief ingredient of a unique national music. The religious element he regards yearningly. Yet his argument stands: his band of composers took what they wanted from the church and no more; their work survived the despotism of the church and what musical contributions eighteenth-century France and Italy had dumped in Russia.

So far, so good. He is well informed, he has perception and balance. And so far, the book is the best we have to date.

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But from that point onward, faced by his Iron Curtain, he relies too much on conjecture and loses control of his native sagacity. "Soviet music," he concludes, "has been forcibly cut off from one of the richest of art-soils—religion." In any case that soil has plainly shown signs of impoverishment for decades. Yet, in the work of Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Shostakovich, he recognises the same wonderful eclecticism vigorously alive—and has no faith in it.

The main stream of Russian eclecticism is still invigorating the Soviet way of life, but for Mr. Leonard to admit that would be to rob himself of a darling set of suspicions and prejudices.

The regrettable result is that Mr. Leonard has cut the value of a promising book in half more effectually than a real iron curtain could.

H.G.S.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

AGRARIAN HISTORY OF ENGLAND, STUDIES IN THE. E. A. Kosminsky. Ed. R. Hilton. Tr. R. Kisch. (*Basil Blackwell*, 37/6.)

CHUKOTKA, STORIES FROM. Rit-kheyu. (*Lawrence and Wishart*, 12/6.)

DAYS OF OUR LIFE. Vera Ketlinskaya. Tr. A. Bostock. (*Lawrence and Wishart*, 15/-.)

DRAMA, August 1956. (*British Drama League*, 1/6.)

LITERARY POLITICS IN THE SOVIET UKRAINE, 1917-34. G. S. N. Luckyj. (*Columbia University Press/Geoffrey Cumberlege*, 40/-.)

POLITICAL AFFAIRS, September 1956. (*New Century Publishers*, 35c.)

RUSSIA AND US, No. 8, August 1956. (*Australia-Soviet Friendship Society*, 3d.)

RUSSIA REVIEWED. S. G. Evans. (*Religion and the People*, 9d.)

SCHOOL, SOVIET RUSSIA GOES TO. Beatrice King. r.e. (*People's Publishing House, Delhi*, 6/-.)

SOVIET STUDIES, Vol. VIII, No. 1, July 1956. (*Basil Blackwell*, 10/6.)

UNMEASURED HAZARDS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF TESTS OF ATOMIC AND THERMO-NUCLEAR WEAPONS. (*World Federation of Scientific Workers*, 2/-.)

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